THE DUNE COUNTRY

EARL H. REED

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THE DUNE COUNTRY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE VOICES OF THE DUNES

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ETCHING:

A PRACTICAL TREATISE

CROWN QUARTO CLOTH $2.50 NET

The Dune Country

THE DUNE COUNTRY

By

EARL H. REED

AUTHOR OF
"THE VOICES OF THE DUNES"
"ETCHING: A PRACTICAL TREATISE"

WITH SIXTY ILLUSTRATIONS
BY THE AUTHOR

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To C. C. R.

INTRODUCTION

THE text and illustrations in this book are intended to depict a strange and picturesque country, with some of its interesting wild life, and a few of the unique human characters that inhabit it.

The big ranges of sand dunes that skirt the southern and eastern shores of Lake Michigan, and the strip of sparsely settled broken country back of them, contain a rich fund of material for the artist, poet, and nature lover, as well as for those who would seek out the oddities of human kind in by-paths remote from much travelled highways.

In the following pages are some of the results of numerous sketching trips into this region, covering a series of years. Much material was found that was beyond the reach of the etching needle or the lead pencil, but many things seemed to come particularly within the province of those mediums, and they have both been freely used.

While many interesting volumes could be filled by pencil and pen, this story of the dunes and the "back country" has been condensed as much as seems consistent with the portrayal of their essential characteristics.

We are lured into the wilds by a natural instinct. Contact with nature's forms and moods is a necessary stimulant to our spiritual and intellectual life. The untrammelled mind may find inspiration and growth in congenial isolation, for in it there are no competitive or antagonistic influences to divert or destroy its fruitage.

Comparatively isolated human types are usually more interesting, for the reason that individual development and natural ruggedness have not been rounded and polished by social attrition.

Social attrition would have ruined "old Sipes," a part of whose story is in this book, and if it had ever been mentioned to him he probably would have thought that it was something that lived up in the woods that he had never seen.

Fictitious names have, for various reasons, been substituted for some of the characters in the following chapters. One of the old derelicts objected strenuously to the use of his name. "I don't want to be in no book," said he. "You can draw all the pitchers o' me you want to, an' use 'em, but as fer names, there's nothin' doin'."

"Old Sipes" suggested that if "Doc Looney's pitcher was put in a book, some o' them females might see it an' locate 'im," but as the "Doc" has now disappeared this danger is probably remote.

E. H. R.

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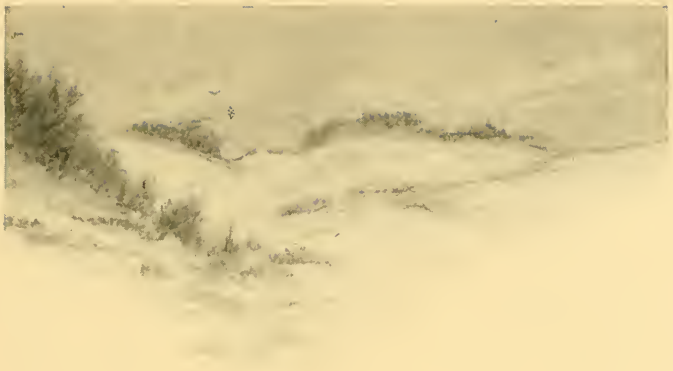
THE DUNE COUNTRY



CHAPTER I

THE DUNE COUNTRY

WHILE there are immense stretches of sand dunes in other parts of the world, it is of a particular dune country, to which many journeys have been made, and in which many days have been spent, that this story will be told.

The dunes sweep for many miles along the Lake Michigan coasts. They are post-glacial, and are undergoing slow continual changes, both in form and place,—the loose sand responding lightly to the action of varying winds.

The "fixed dunes" retain general forms, more or less stable, owing to the scraggly and irregular vegetation that has obtained a foothold upon them, but the "wandering dunes" move constantly. The fine sand is wafted in shimmering veils across the smooth expanses, over the ridges to the lee slopes. It swirls in soft clouds from the wind-swept summits, and, in the course of time, whole forests are engulfed. After years of entombment, the dead trunks and branches occasionally reappear in the path of the destroyer, and bend back with gnarled arms in self-defence, seeming to challenge their flinty foe to further conflict.

The general movement is east and southeast, owing to the prevalence of west and northwest winds in this region, which gather force in coming over the waters of the lake. The finer grains, which are washed up on the beach, are carried inland, the coarser particles remaining near the shore. The off-shore winds, being broken by the topography of the country, exercise a less but still noticeable influence. The loose masses retreat perceptibly toward the beach when these winds prevail for any great length of time.

To many this region simply means a distant line of sandy crests, tree-flecked and ragged, against the sky on the horizon—a mysterious and unknown waste, without commercial value, and therefore useless from a utilitarian standpoint.

It is not the land, but the landscape, not the utility, but the romantic and interesting wild life among these yellow ranges that is of value. It is the picturesque and poetic quality that we find in this land of enchantment that appeals to us, and it is because of this love in our lives that we now enter this strange country.

The landscapes among the dunes are not for the realist, not for the cold and discriminating recorder of facts, nor the materialist who would weigh with exact scales or look with scientific eyes. It is a country for the dreamer and the poet, who would cherish its secrets, open enchanted locks, and explore hidden vistas, which the Spirit of the Dunes has kept for those who understand.

The winds have here fashioned wondrous forms with the shuttles of the air and the mutable sands. Shadowy fortresses have been reared and bannered with the pines. Illusive distant towers are tinged

by the subtle hues of the afterglows, as the twilights softly blend them into the glooms. In the fading light we may fancy the outlines of frowning castles and weird battlements, with ghostly figures along their heights.

If the desert was of concrete, its mystery and spiritual power would not exist. The deadly silences which nature leaves among her ruins are appalling, unless brightened by her voices of enduring hope. It is then that our spirits revive with her.

There is an unutterable gloom in the hush of the rocky immensities, where, in dim ages past, the waters have slowly worn away the stony barriers of the great canyons among the mountains. The countless centuries seem to hang over them like a pall, when no living green comes forth among the stones to nourish the soul with faith in life to come. We walk in these profound solitudes with an irresistible sense of spiritual depression.

On Nature's great palette green is the color of hope. We see it in the leaves when the miracle of the spring unfolds them, and on the ocean's

troubled waters when the sun comes from behind the curtains of the sky. Even the tiny mosses cover with their mantles the emblems of despair when decay begins its subtle work on the fallen tree and broken stump.

We find in the dune country whatever we take to it. The repose of the yellow hills, which have been sculptured by the winds and the years, reflects the solemnity of our minds, and eternal hope is sustained by the expectant life that creeps from every fertile crevice.

While the wandering masses are fascinating, it is among the more permanent forms, where nature has laid her restraining hand, that we find the most picturesque material. It is here that the reconstructive processes have begun which impart life to the waste places. At first, among these wastes, one is likely to have a sense of loneliness. The long, undulating lines of ridged sand inspire thoughts of hopeless melancholy. The sparse vegetation, which in its struggle for life pathetically seizes and holds the partially fertile spots among these ever-shifting masses, has the appearance of broken submission. The wildly tangled roots—

derelicts of the sands—which have been deserted and left to bleach in the sun by the slow movement of the great hills, emphasize the feeling of

"DERELICTS OF THE SANDS"

isolation. The changing winds may again give them a winding sheet, but as a part of nature's refuse, they are slowly and steadily being resolved back into her crucible.

To the colorist the dunes present ever-changing panoramas of hue and tone. Every cloud that trails its purple, phantom-like shadow across them

can call forth the resources of his palette, and he can find inspiration in the high nooks where the pines cling to their perilous anchorage.

The etcher may revel in their wealth of line. The harmonic undulations of the long, serrated crests, with sharp accents of gnarled roots and stunted trees, offer infinite possibilities in composition. To the imaginative enthusiast, seeking poetic forms of line expression, these dwarfed, neglected, crippled, and wasted things become subtle units in artistic arrangement.

As in all landscape, we find much material in these subjects that is entirely useless from an artistic standpoint. The thoughtful translator must be rigidly selective, and his work must go to other minds, to which he appeals, stripped of dross and unencumbered with superfluities. An ugly and ill-arranged mass of light and shade, that may disfigure the foreground, may be eliminated from the composition, but the graceful and slender weed growing near it may be used. A low, dark cloud in the distance may be carried a little farther away, if necessary, or it may be blown entirely away, if another cloud—floating only in the realm of im-

agination—will furnish the desired note of harmony. Truth need not necessarily be fact, but we must not include in our composition that which is not possible or natural to our subject. Representation of fact is not art, in its pure sense, but

IN THE WILD PLACES

effective expression of thought, which fact may inspire, is art—and there is but one art, although there are many mediums.

One must feel the spirit and poetry of the dunes, if he deals with them as an artist who would send

their story into the world. The magic of successful artistic translation changes the sense of desolation into an impression of wild, weird beauty and romantic charm. It is the wildness, the mystery, the deep solemnity, and the infinite grandeur of this region which furnish themes of appealing picturesqueness.

Man has changed or destroyed natural scenery wherever he has come into practical contact with it. The fact that these wonderful hills are left to us is simply because he has not yet been able to carry away and use the sand of which they are composed. He has dragged the pines from their storm-scarred tops, and is utilizing their sands for the elevation of city railway tracks. Shrieking, rasping wheels now pass over them, instead of the crow's shadow, the cry of the tern, or the echo of waves from glistening and untrampled shores.

The turmoil and bustle of the outside world is not heard on the placid stretches of these quiet undulations. Here the weary spirit finds repose among elemental forms which the ravages of civilization have left unspoiled. If we take beautiful minds and beautiful hearts into the dune country,

we will find only beauty in it; and if we have not the love of beauty, we walk in darkness.

Filmy veils of white mist gather in the hollows during the still, cool hours of the night, and begin to move like curling smoke wreaths with the first faint breaths of dawn. The early hours of the morning are full of strange enchantment, and dawn on the dunes brings many wonders. When the first gray tones of light appear, the night-prowlers seek seclusion, and the stillness is broken by the crows. A single note is heard from among the boughs of a far-off pine, and in a few moments the air is filled with the noisy conversation of these interesting birds—mingled with the cries of the gulls and terns, which have come in from the lake and are searching for the refuse of the night waves. The beams of a great light burst through the trees—the leaves and the sands are touched with gold—and the awakening of the hills has come.

The twilights bring forth manifold beauties which the bright glare of the day has kept within their hiding-places. The rich purples that have been concealed among secret recesses creep out on

(From the Author's Etching)

DAWN IN THE HILLS

the open spaces to meet the silvery light of the rising moon, and the colors of the dusk come to weave a web of phantasy over the landscape.

It is then that the movement of nocturnal life

(From the Author's Etching)
TWILIGHT ON THE DUNES

commences and the tragedies of the night begin. A fleeting silhouette of a wing intersects the moon's disc, and a dark shadowy thing moves swiftly across the sky-line of the trees. An attentive

listener will hear many strange and mysterious sounds. The Dune People are coming forth to seek their food from God.

When the morning comes, if the air is still, we

"A FLEETING SILHOUETTE OF A WING INTERSECTS THE MOON'S DISC"

can find the stories on the sand. Its surface is interlaced with thousands of little tracks and trails, leading in all directions. The tracks of the toads, and the hundreds of creeping insects on which

they subsist, are all over the open places, crossed and recrossed many times by the footmarks of crows, herons, gulls, sandpipers, and other birds.

The movement of the four-footed life is mostly nocturnal. We find the imprints of the fox, raccoon, mink, muskrat, skunk, white-footed mouse, and other quadrupeds, that have been active during the night. To the practiced eye these trails are readily distinguishable, and often traces are found of a tragedy that has been enacted in the darkness. Some confused marks, and a mussy-looking spot on the sand, record a brief struggle for existence, and perhaps a few mangled remains, with some scattered feathers or bits of fur, are left to tell the tale. A weak life has gone out to support a stronger.

With the exception of the insects, the mice are the most frequent victims. Their hiding-places under tufts of grass, old stumps and decayed wood are ruthlessly sought out and the little families eagerly devoured. The owls glide silently over the wastes, searching the deep shadows for the small, velvet-footed creatures whose helplessness

renders them easy prey. They are subject to immutable law and must perish.

Much of the mysterious lure of the dunes is in the magnificent sweep of the great lake along the wild shores. Its restless waters are the complement of the indolent sands. The distant bands of deep blue and green, dappled with dancing whitecaps, in the vistas through the openings, impart vivid color accents to the grays and neutral tones of the foregrounds.

No great mind has ever flowered to its fullness that was insensible to the allurements of a large body of water. It may be likened to a human soul. It is now tempestuous, and now placid. Beneath its surface are unknown caverns and unsounded depths into which light never goes. If by chance some piercing ray should ever reach them, wondrous beauty might be revealed.

The waters of the lake are never perfectly still. In calms that seem absolute, a careful eye will find at least a slight undulation.

On quiet days the little waves ripple and lisp along the miles of wet sand, and the delicate streaks of oscillating foam creep away in a feathery and

uncertain line, that fades and steals around a distant curve in the shore.

After the storms the long ground-swells roll in for days, beating their rhythmic measures, and

(From the Author's Etching)

THE SONG OF THE EAST SHORE

unfolding their snowy veils before them as they come.

The echoes of the roar of the surf among the distant dunes pervade them with solemn sound. An indefinable spirit of mute resistance and power

broods in the inert masses. They seem to be holding back mighty and remote forces that beat upon their barriers.

The color fairies play out on the bosom of the lake in the silver radiance of the moon and stars, and marvelous tones are spread upon it by the sun and clouds. Invisible brushes, charged with celestial pigments, seem to sweep over its great expanse, mingling prismatic hues and changing them fitfully, in wayward fancy, as a master might delight to play with a medium that he had conquered. Fugitive cloud shadows move swiftly over areas of turquoise and amethyst. Fleeting iridescent hues revel with the capricious breezes in loving companionship.

When the storm gods lash the lake with whistling winds, and send their sullen dark array through the skies, and the music of the tempest blends with song of the surges on the shore, the color tones seem to become vocal and to mingle their cadences with the voices of the gale.

We may look from the higher dune tops upon panoramas of surpassing splendor. There are piles on piles of sandy hills, accented with green

masses and solitary pines. These highways of the winds and storms, with their glittering crowns and shadowy defiles, sweep into dim perspective. Their noble curves become smaller and smaller,

(From the Author's Etching)

HIGHWAYS OF THE WINDS

until they are folded away and lost on the horizon's hazy rim.

A sinuous ribbon of sunlit beach winds along the line of the breakers, and meets the point of a misty headland far away.

The blue immensity of the lake glistens, and is flecked with foam. White plumes are tossing and waving along the sky-line. In the foreground little groups of sandpipers are running nimbly along the edges of the incoming waves, racing after them as they retreat, and lightly taking wing when they come too near. There are flocks of stately gulls, balancing themselves with set wings, high in the wind, and a few terns are skimming along the crests. The gray figures of two or three herons are stalking about, with much dignity, near some driftwood that dots the dry sand farther up the shore.

Colors rare and glorious are in the sky. The sun is riding down in a chariot of gold and purple, attended by a retinue of clouds in resplendent robes. The twilight comes, the picture fades, but the spell remains.

Intrepid voyagers from the Old World journeyed along these primitive coasts centuries ago. Their footprints were soon washed away in the surf lines, but the romance of their trails still rests upon the sands that they traversed.

In years of obscure legend, birch-bark canoes

were drawn out on the gleaming beach by red men who carried weapons of stone. They hunted and fought among the yellow hills. They saw them basking under summer suns, and swept by the furies of winter storms. From their tops they watched the dying glories of the afterglows in the western skies. They saw the great lake shimmer in still airs, and heard the pounding of remorseless waters in its sterner moods. They who carried the weapons of stone are gone, and time has hidden them in the silence of the past.

Out in the mysterious depths of the lake are pale sandy floors that no eye has ever seen. The mobile particles are shifted and eddied into strange shadowy forms by the inconstant and unknown currents that flow in the gloom. There are white bones and ghostly timbers there which are buried and again uncovered. There are dunes under the waters, as well as on the shores. Slimy mosses creep along their shelving sides and over their pallid tops into profound chasms beyond. Finny life moves among the subaqueous vegetation that thrives in the fertile areas, and out over the smooth wastes,

but this is a world concealed. Our pictures are in the air.

When winter lays its mantle of snow upon the country of the dunes the whitened crests loom in softened lines. The contours become spectral in their chaste robes. Along the frosty summits the intricacies of the naked trees and branches, in their winter sleep, are woven delicately against the moody skies, and the hills, far away, draped in their chill raiment, stand in faint relief on the gray horizon. The black companies of the crows wing across the snow-clad heights in desultory flight.

When the bitter blasts come out of the clouds in the north, the light snow scurries over the hoary tops into the shelters of the hollows. Out in the ice fields on the lake grinding masses heave with the angry surges that seek the shore. Crystal fragments, shattered and splintered, shine in the dim light, far out along the margins of the open, turbulent water. Great piles of broken ice have been flung along the beach, heaped into bewildering forms by the billows, and a few gulls

skirt the ragged frozen mounds for possible stray bits of food.

The wind and the cold have builded grim ramparts for the sunshine and the April rains to conquer.

(*From the Author's Etching*)

"HERALDS OF THE STORM"

CHAPTER II

THE GULLS AND TERNS

THE gulls are a picturesque and interesting feature of dune life. These gray and white birds, while they do not entirely avoid human association, have few of the home-like charms of most of our feathered neighbors.

"Catfish John," the old fisherman with whom I often talked about the birds and animals in the dune country, had very little use for them. He said that "they flopped 'round a whole lot, an' seemed to keep a goin'." He "didn't never find no eggs, an' they didn't seem to set anywheres. They git away with the bait when its left out, an' they seem mostly to live off'n fish an' dead things they find on the beach an' floatin' round in the lake. They'll tackle a mouthful big enough to choke a horse if they like the looks of it."

He thought that "them that roosted out on the net stakes didn't go to sleep entirely, or they'd slip off in the night."

The gull has many charms for the ornithologist and the poet. He is valuable to the artist, as an

accent in the sky, when he is on the wing, giving a thrill of life to the most desolate landscape.

He is interesting to the eye when proudly walking along the beach, or sitting silently, with hun-

"THEM THAT ROOSTED OUT ON THE NET STAKES"

dreds of others, in solemn conclave on the shore. Old piles and floating objects in the lake have an added interest with his trim figure perched upon them. The perched birds seem magnified and ghostly when one comes suddenly upon them in

the fog and they disappear with shrill cries into the mists.

There is no gleam of human interest in the eye of a gull. It is fierce, cold, and utterly wild. The birds we love most are those that nest in the land in which we live. The home is the real bond among living things, and our feathered friends creep easily into our affections when we can hear their love songs and watch their home life.

The transient winged tribes, that come and go—like ships on the sea—and rear their young in other lands, arouse our poetic reflections, challenge our admiration, and excite our love of the beautiful. They delight our eyes but not our hearts.

The graceful forms of the gulls give an ethereal note of exaltation to the spirit of the landscape—a suggestion of the Infinite—as they soar in long curves in the azure blue, or against the dark clouds that roll up in portentous masses from the distant horizon and sweep across the heavens over the great lake. They are the heralds of the storms, and a typical expression of life in the sky.

Their matchless grace on the wing, as they wheel in the teeth of the tempest or glide with set pin-

ions in the currents of the angry winds, makes them a part of nature's dramas in the heavens—aloof and remote from earthly things—mingling with the unseen forces and mysteries of the Great Unknown.

These rovers of the clouds seem to love no abodes but the stormy skies and foaming waves. Their flights are desultory when the winds are still. When the calms brood over the face of the waters, they congregate on the glassy surface, like little white fleets at anchor, and rest for hours, until hunger again takes them into the air.

They often leave the lake and soar over the dune country on windy days, searching far inland for food, but when night comes they return to the water.

In early August they come down from the Lake Superior country and from the more distant north, where perhaps many of them have spent the summer near the arctic circle. They bring with them their big brown young, from the rocky islands in those remote regions, and to these islands they will return in the spring. The young birds do not don their silver-gray plumage until the second year.

In the autumn the unseen paths in the sky are filled with countless wings on their way to the tropics, but the gulls remain to haunt the bare landscapes and the chill waters of the lake, until the return of the great multitudes of migrant birds in April or May, when they leave for their northern homes.

In the wake of the gulls come the terns—those graceful, gliding little creatures in pearl-gray robes—which skim and hover over the waves, and search them for their daily food.

There is something peculiarly elf-like and wispy in their flight. Agile and keen eyed, with their mosquito-like bills pointed downward, they dart furtively, like water-sprites, along the crests of the billows, seeming to winnow the foam and spray.

With low plaintive cries the scattered flocks follow the surf lines against the wind and the dipping wings can be seen far out over the lake.

They often pause in the air, and drop like plummets, entirely out of sight under water, in pursuit of unsuspecting small fish, to reappear with the wiggling tails of the little victims protruding from their bills. Many thousands of them patrol the

shores and waters, but they also are transients, and soon wing their ways to colder or warmer climes.

The nature lover finds manifold charms in the bird life of the dune country. There are many varieties to interest him. While we may endeavor to restrict our consideration to the purely artistic side of the subject, it would be impossible to define a point that would separate the artistic instinct from the love of the live things, and of nature in general, for there is no such point. One merges naturally into the other.

It is not necessary for a lover of nature to have an exact scientific knowledge of all the things he sees in order to derive enjoyment from them, but a trained observer is more sensitive to the poetic influences of nature, has a wider range of vision, a greater capacity for appreciation, and is more deeply responsive to the subtle harmonies than one who is only susceptible to the more obvious aspects.

The love of the Little Things which are concealed from the ordinary eye comes only to one who has sought out their hiding-places, and learned their ways by tender and long association. Their

world and ours is fundamentally the same, and to know them is to know ourselves.

We sometimes cannot tell whether the clear, flutelike note from the depths of the ravine comes from the thrush or the oriole, but we know that the little song has carried us just a little nearer to nature's heart than we were before. If we could see the singer and learn his name, his silvery tones would be still more pure and sweet when he comes again.

The spring songs in the dune country seem to exalt and sanctify the forest aisles, and to weave a spell out over the open spaces. The still sands seem to awaken under the vibrant melodies of the choirs among the trees. These sanctuaries are not for those who would "shower shot into a singing tree," but for him who comes to listen and to worship.

The voices of the dunes are in many keys. The cries of the gulls and crows—the melodies of the songsters—the wind tones among the trees—the roar of the surf on the shore—the soft rustling of the loose sands, eddying among the beach grasses —the whirr of startled wings in the ravines—the

piping of the frogs and little toads in the marshy spots—the chorus of the katydids and locusts—the prolonged notes of the owls at night—and many other sounds, all blend into the greater song of the hills, and become a part of the appeal to our higher emotions, in this land of enchantment and mystery.

CHAPTER III

THE TURTLES

SOMETIMES we find interesting little comedies mapped on the sands.

One morning the July sun had come from behind the clouds, after a heavy rain, and quickly dried the surface, leaving the firm, wet sand underneath. On the dunes, walks are particularly delightful when the moist, packed sand becomes a yellow floor, but it requires much endurance and

enthusiasm to trudge through miles of soft sand on a hot day and retain a contemplative mood.

We suddenly came upon some turtle tracks, beginning abruptly out on an open space, indicating that the traveler had probably withdrawn into the privacy and shelter of his mobile castle, and resumed his journey when the sun appeared. All traces of his arrival at the point where the tracks began had been obliterated by the rain.

We were curious to ascertain his objective, and as the trail was in perfect condition, we followed it carefully for several hundred yards, when we found another trail interrupting it obliquely from another direction. Within an area of perhaps twenty feet in diameter the tracks had left a confused network on the smooth sand. Evidently there had been much discussion and consideration before a final decision had been reached. Then the trails started off in the same direction, side by side, varying from a foot to two feet or so apart.

There was much mystery in all this. Our curiosity continued, and about half a mile farther on the smaller trail of the last comer suddenly veered off toward the lake and disappeared in the wet

sand of the beach. The original trail finally ended several hundred yards farther on in a clear stream, and there we saw Mr. Hardfinish resting quietly on the shallow bottom, with the cool current flowing over him.

We may have stumbled on a turtle romance. Perhaps a tryst had been kept, and after much argument and persuasion the two had decided to combine their destinies. It may have been incompatibility of temperament, or affection grown cold, which caused the later estrangement. A fickle heart may have throbbed under the shell of the faithless amphibian who had joined the expedition, but whatever the cause of the separation was, the initiator of the journey had been left to finish it alone. His trail showed no wavering at the point of desertion, and evidently the rhythm of his march was not disturbed by it.

There is much food for reflection in this story on the sand. What we call human nature is very largely the nature of all animal life, and community of interest governs all association. When it ceases to exist, the quadruped or biped invariably seeks isolation. Selfishness is soul solitude.

In the case of the turtles the highly civilized divorce courts were not necessary. They simply quit.

The record of the little romance was written upon a frail page, which the next wind or shower obliterated as completely as time effaces most of the stories of human lives.

The turtles are persistent wanderers. Their trails are found all through the dune country, and usually a definite objective seems to be indicated. A trail will begin at the margin of a small pond back of the hills, and follow practically a direct route for a long distance to another pond, often over a mile away. Sometimes high eminences intervene, which are patiently climbed over without material alteration in the course which the mysterious compass under the brown shell has laid before it.

The deserted habitat may have been invaded by unwelcome new arrivals and rendered socially unattractive. Domestic complications may have inspired the pilgrimage, the voyager may have decided that he was unappreciated in the community in which he lived, or he may have been

excommunicated for unbelief in established turtle dogmas.

The common variegated pond turtle, which is the variety most often found among the dunes, is a beautiful harmless creature, but his wicked cousin, the snapping turtle, is an ugly customer. He leads a life of debased villainy, and no justification for his existence has yet been discovered. He is a rank outlaw, and the enemy of everything within his radius of destruction. His crimes are legion, and like the sand-burr, he seems to be one of nature's inadvertencies. The mother ducks, the frog folk, and all the small life in the sloughs dread his sinister bulk and relentless jaws.

He is a voracious brute, and feeds upon all kinds of animal fare. He often attains a weight of about forty pounds, and the rough moss covered shell of a full grown specimen is sometimes fourteen inches long. One of the peculiarities of this repulsive wretch is that he strikes at his victims much in the same manner as a rattlesnake, and with lightning-like rapidity.

Possibly he was sent into the world to assist in enabling us to accentuate our blessings by con-

trast—as some people we occasionally meet undoubtedly were—and it is best to let him absolutely alone. He is an evil and unclean thing and we will pass him by. Like the skunk, he does not invite companionship, and has no social charms whatever.

It was not he who helped to play the little comedy on the sand.

SOCIALLY UNATTRACTIVE

"STEADILY WINGING THEIR WAY
TO THE CHOSEN SPOT"

CHAPTER IV

THE CROWS

OF all the wild life among the dunes, the crow is the most active and conspicuous. He is ever present in the daytime, and his black form seems to be intimately associated with nearly every mass and contour in the landscape.

The artists and the poets can love him, but the hand of the prosaic and the philistine is against him. His enemies are numberless, and his life is one of constant combat and elusion. The owls seek him at night, and during the day he meets antagonism in many forms. Some ornithologists have tried to find justification for the crow, but the weight of the testimony is against him. He pilfers the eggs and nestlings of the songsters, invades the newly planted cornfields, and apparently abuses every confidence reposed in him.

He has been known to take his family into fields of sprouting potatoes and, when the plants were hardly out of the ground, feed its members on the

soft tubers which were used as seed. Even very young chickens and ducks enter into his economies. He is an inveterate mischiefmaker, and by those who fail to see the attractive sides of his character, is looked upon as a general nuisance.

He cannot be considered valuable from a utilitarian point of view, but as a picturesque element he possesses many charms. Notwithstanding the sins laid at his door, this bird is of absorbing interest. His genteel insolence, his ability to cope with the wiles of his persecutors, and his complete self-assurance may well challenge our admiration.

He takes full charge of the dune country before the morning sun appears above the horizon, and maintains his vigils until the evening shadows relieve him from further responsibility. All of the happenings on the sands, and among the pines, are subjected to his careful inspection and noisy comment. His curiosity is intense, and any unusual object or event will attract his excited scrutiny and an agitated assemblage of his friends.

Like many people, he is both wise and foolish to a surprising degree. He is crafty and circumspect in his methods of obtaining food and avoid-

ing most of his enemies, but shows a lack of judgment when his curiosity is aroused.

He will approach quite near to a person sitting still, but will retreat in great trepidation at the slightest movement. An old crow knows the difference between a cane and a gun, but a man carrying a gun can ride a horse much nearer to him than he can go on foot.

In the community life of the crows there is much material for study. Their social organization is cohesive and effective. It is impossible not to believe that they have a limited language. Different cries produce different effects among them. They undoubtedly communicate with each other. The older and wiser crows have qualities of leadership which compel or attract the obedience of the sable hordes that follow them in long processions through the air, to and from the feeding grounds, and to the roosting-places at night.

The cries of the leaders are distinctive, and the entire band will wheel and change the direction of its flight when the loud signal comes from the head of the column. These bands often number several thousand birds.

After spending the day in detached groups, they gather late in the afternoon, and prepare for the flight to the roosting-grounds, which is an affair

(From the Author's Etching)
NEIGHBORHOOD GOSSIP

of the utmost importance and ceremony. A single scout will come ahead, and after slowly and carefully inspecting the area in the forest where the night is usually spent, he returns in the direction from which he came.

In a few minutes several crows come over the same course and apparently verify the conditions. These also return, and a little later, perhaps twenty or thirty more will appear and fly all over the territory under consideration. They go and report to the main body beyond the hills, and soon the horizon becomes black with the oncoming phalanxes, steadily winging their way to the chosen spot.

For a long time the sky above it is filled with their dark forms, circling and hovering over and among the trees. Much uncertainty seems to agitate them, and there is a great deal of noisy confusion before even comparative quiet comes. It requires about half an hour for them to get comfortably settled after their arrival. Sentinels are posted and they maintain a vigilant watch during the night.

I have sat quietly on a log and seen these multitudes settle into the trees around me in the deep woods. Although perfectly motionless, I have sometimes been detected by a watchful sentinel. His quick, loud note of alarm arouses the entire aggregation, and the air is immediately filled with

the turmoil of discordant cries and beating wings. Sacred precincts have been invaded, and an enemy is within the gates.

After much anxiety, and shifting of positions, confidence seems to be finally restored, and the black masses on the bending boughs become quiet.

A footfall on the dead leaves, the snapping of a twig, a suspicious movement among the trees, or the hoot of an owl, may alarm the wary watchers and start another uproar that will result in complete desertion of the vicinity of the suspected danger.

When morning comes, various groups visit the beach and strut along the shore, drinking and picking up stray morsels. Dead fish that have been cast in by the waves, and numerous insects crawling on the sand, are eagerly devoured. Usually before sunrise the crows have started out over the country in detached flocks.

Like all the affairs of the crows, courtship is a serious and important matter. The young male stretches his wings, struts dramatically, and performs all kinds of crow feats to attract favorable glances from the coy eyes of a black divinity who

sits demurely still and waits. After the manner of female kind, she will remain obdurate as long as supplication continues. She will yield only when it ceases.

(From the Author's Etching)

"THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE"

Several days are spent in the wooing. It often has its vicissitudes. The proverbial course of true love has its rough spots, for sometimes shiny-coated rivals come which are insistent and boisterous.

They refuse to respect a privacy that is much desired, and create unwelcome disturbances.

There are battles in the tree-tops that send many black feathers down before the fickle beauty makes her final decision. She has little love for defeated suitors, and her admiration is the spoil of the victor when trouble comes.

When the love-making is over the happy pair begin the construction of the nest, which is usually composed of broken twigs or small bits of grape vine, and lined with moss or dead grass. It is generally built about thirty feet from the ground among the strong branches in the deep woods. It is jealously guarded, and combats with would-be intruders are numerous and desperate. The sharp bills are effective weapons when the home is at stake, and it is a bold invader who would risk contact with them for the sake of the mottled eggs or the tender young in the nest.

The crow may be a subtle and artful villain, and his evil ways may have brought him into disrepute, but he has picturesque quality. His black form is often an effective accent in composition, and his

presence adds character and interest to the waste places.

The black roving flocks impart a peculiar charm to the white winter landscapes. The bleak uplands and the solemn trees in the still bare woods are enlivened by the dark busy forms. They seem undaunted by the cold and but few of them migrate. During the winter storms they find what refuge they can in the seclusion of the hollows in the deep woods, and among the heavy foliage of the pines. They eke out a precarious livelihood, with scanty food and uncertain shelter, until nature becomes more heedful of their wants and again sends the springtime into the world.

This bird has his own peculiar and special ways of living, which are adapted to his own temperament and necessities. He is only a crow, and nature never intended that he should adjust himself to the convenience and desires of other forms of animal life. He is without ethics or conscience, and in this he differs little from the man with a gun.

Some of the most pleasant memories of the dunes are clustered around "Billy," a pet crow which re-

mained with us one summer through the kindness of a naturalist friend. He was acquired at a tender age, a small boy having abstracted him from a happy home in an old tree in the deep woods.

(*From the Author's Etching*)

"BILLY"

His early life was devoted principally to bread and milk, hard boiled eggs, bits of meat, and other food, with which he had to be constantly supplied. A large cage was built for his protection as well

as for his confinement, until he could become domesticated and strong enough to take care of himself.

He became clamorous at unreasonable morning hours, and required constant attention during the day. His comical and whimsical ways soon found him a place in our affections, and Billy became a member of the family.

He developed a decided character of his own. When he was old enough to fly he was given his freedom, which he utilized in his own way. He would spend a large part of his time in a nearby ravine, studying the problems of crow life, but his visits to the house were frequent, and his demands insistent when he was hungry.

He would almost invariably discover the departure of any one of us who left the house, flying short distances ahead and waiting until he was overtaken, or proudly riding on our heads or shoulders, if he was not quite sure of the general direction of the expedition.

The berry patch was a great attraction to him, and if we took a basket with us he would help

himself to the fruit after it had been picked, much preferring to have the picking done for him.

One of his delights was walking back and forth on the hammock. The loose meshes seemed to fascinate him, and he would spend much time in studying its intricacies and picking at the knots. He soon became distantly acquainted with Gip, our black cocker spaniel. While no particular intimacy developed between them, each seemed to understand that the other was a part of the family. They finally got to the point where they would eat out of the same dish.

Billy was a delightful companion on many sketching trips into the dunes, and it was amusing to watch the perplexities of the wild crows when my close association with one of their own kind was observed. They could not understand the relationship, and it gave rise to much animated discussion. Billy was immediately visited when he flew into a tree top, and carefully looked over. Other crows joined in the consultations and the final verdict was not always favorable, for hostility frequently became evident, and poor Billy was compelled to leave the tree, often with cruel

wounds. He was probably regarded as a heretic and a backslider, who had violated all crow traditions—a fit subject for ostracism and seclusion beyond the pale.

He promptly responded to my call when he got into trouble, or thought it might be lunch-time. He would watch with much interest the undoing of the sandwiches, and would wait expectantly on my knee for the coveted tid-bits which constituted his share of the meal.

When preparations were made for the return, Billy's interest in the day's proceedings seemed to flag, and he would suddenly disappear, not to be seen again until the next morning, when he would alight on the rail of the back porch and loudly demand his breakfast.

I was never able to ascertain where he spent a great part of his time. His identity was, of course, lost when he was with the other crows unless he happened to get into a storm center near the house, and we only knew him when he was with us.

He had the elemental love of color, which always begins with red, and the vermilion on my palette seemed to exercise a spell over him. After

getting his bill into it, he would plume and pick his feathers, and I have spent considerable time with a rag and benzine in trying to make him presentable after he had produced quite good post-impressionistic pictures on the feathers of his breast.

Occasionally he would take my pencils or brushes into the trees while I was at work, and play with them for some time, but would not return anything that he had once secured. I often had difficulty in recovering lost articles, but usually he would accidentally drop them. In such cases there would be a race between us, for he quickly became jealous of their possession.

Billy was, to a certain extent, affectionate, and would often come to be petted, alighting on my outstretched hand and holding his head down toward me. When his head feathers were stroked gently, low, contented sounds indicated the pleasure he took in the attention devoted to him.

Stories of the numerous little tricks and insinuating ways of this interesting bird could occupy many pages, but enough has been told to convey an idea of his character. Perhaps he may have

been a rascal at heart, but his ancestry was responsible for his moral shortcomings.

One morning we missed Billy, and we possibly have never seen him since. He may have answered "the call of the wild" and joined the black company that goes over into the back country in the morning and returns to the bluffs at night, or he may have fallen a victim to indiscriminating overconfidence in mankind—a misfortune that is not confined to crows.

He left tender recollections with us. He had an engaging personality, and was a most admirable and lovable crow. Such an epitaph would be due him if he has departed from life, and a more sincere tribute could not be offered him if he still lives.

During the following year I was able to approach quite near to a crow who seemed to show slight signs of recognition. A broken pinion in his left wing, a reminiscence of a vicious battle in the fall, seemed to complete the identification of Billy. He appeared to be making his headquarters in the ravine. Further careful observation and investigation convinced me that if this crow was actually Billy, he had laid three eggs.

The name, however, meant much to us, and by simply changing its spelling to "Billie," we preserved its pleasant associations.

A HAPPY HOME

It was a contented couple whose nest was in the gnarled branches in the ravine, where the little home was protected from the chill spring winds. In due time small, queer-looking heads appeared

above the edge of the nest, with widely opened bills that clamored continuously for the bits of food which the assiduous parents had to supply constantly. The nest required much attention. Marauding red squirrels, owls, hawks, and other enemies had to be kept away from the time the first egg was laid until the fledglings were old enough to fly. Their first attempts resulted in many falls, but they soon became experts, and one morning the entire family was gone.

They probably flew over into the back country, where food was more abundant and where they were subjected to less observation.

The nest was never used again. The twigs, little pieces of wild grapevine, and moss of which it was made, have gradually fallen away during the succeeding years, until but a few fragments remain in the tree crotch. A red lead pencil was found under the tree. Possibly "Billie" may have tucked it in among the twigs as a souvenir of former ties, or its color may have suggested esthetic adornment of a happy home.

"OLD SIPES"

CHAPTER V

OLD SIPES

BEYOND its barren wastes, inland, the dune country merges into the fertile soil and comes into contact with the highly trained selfishness which in this age of iron we call civilization. The steady waves of such a civilization have thrown upon this desolate margin some of its human derelicts—men who have failed in the strife and who have been cast ashore. Their little

huts of driftwood are scattered here and there at long distances from each other, among the depressions and behind the big masses of sand along the shore.

Their faces wear a dejected look. They walk with shambling step, and their bearing is that of men who have received heavy blows in their early struggles, which have extinguished the light in their lives. They are, as a rule, morose and taciturn. They have become desocialized, and have sullenly sunk into the hermit lives that harmonize with the dead and tangled roots which the roving sands have left uncovered to bleach and decay in the sun and rain.

They eke out a simple existence with their nets and set-lines in the lake, and by shooting and trapping the small game which still lives in this region. The driftwood supplies them with fuel in winter, and occasional wreckage that is washed ashore sometimes adds conveniences and comparative luxury to their impoverished abodes.

The world has gone on without them, and they are content to exist in solitudes where time is measured by years, rather than by achievement.

Sometimes the bitterness of a broken heart, or the story of thwarted hopes, will come to the surface out of the turbid memories which they carry. When their confidence is inspired by sympathetic association, they will often turn back some of the hidden pages in the stories of their lives, which are almost always of vivid interest.

Feeble flashes will then light up from among the dying embers. The story is not the one of success that the world loves to hear, but it is usually the melodies in the minor keys that touch our hearts. Many of the simple narratives, told under the roof of driftwood, before the rude scrap iron stove, are full of homely philosophy, subtle wit, and tragic interest.

"Old Sipes" was a grotesque character. He was apparently somewhere in the seventies. He had but one eye, his whiskers were scraggly, unequal in distribution, and uncertain as to direction. His old faded hat and short gray coat were quite the worse for wear, and a few patches on his trousers, put on with sail stitches, added a picturesque nautical quality to his attire.

He lived in a small driftwood hut, compactly

built, about sixteen feet long, and perhaps ten feet wide. A rude bunk was built into one side of the single room, and another was placed about three feet above it.

He explained this arrangement of the bunks with quite a long story about a friend of his named Bill Saunders. It seems that he and Saunders had once been shipmates. They had been around the world together, and had cruised in many far-off waters. A howling gale and a lee shore had finally put an inglorious end to the old ship and most of the crew, and left Sipes and Bill on an unknown island in the South Pacific.

His stories of the man-eating sharks and other sea monsters which infested these waters, were hair-raising, and his descriptions of the wonderful natives whom they met, indicated that somewhere a race of people exists that the ethnologists have never found—and would be much astounded if they did. His accounts of man-apes and strange reptiles, olive-skinned beauties, and fierce war-like men nearly seven feet tall, would have made a modern marine novelist pale with envy.

No ship had ever sailed that was as stanch as

the "Blue Porpoise," and no winds had ever blown before like those that took away her proud sails and ripped the shrouds from her sides. No fish-poles had ever bent as her masts did when the ropes parted, and no waves had ever soared as high as those that broke in her faithful ribs, and cast the two shipmates high on the sands of that distant island.

After years of waiting for a friendly sail, Bill married into the royal family several times, and became a part of the kingdom. Sipes persistently resisted blandishment for nearly five years, when a small cloud of black smoke on the horizon gradually grew into a tramp steamer. A boat came ashore for fresh water, and our hero gladly became a member of the crew, leaving happy Bill in the land of luxury and promiscuous matrimony. After a long voyage he was put ashore at some gulf port and became a wanderer.

How he got into the sand hills he didn't exactly know, but his idea was to keep as far as possible away from salt water. He had developed an antipathy for it, and felt that the lake would be quite sufficient for his future needs.

I asked him how he spent his time, and he said, "mostly smokin' an' thinkin' about Bill, an' them sirenes, an' their little black an' tan families, 'way off down there in the South Pacific."

"THINKIN' ABOUT BILL AN' THEM SIRENES"

He hoped that Bill would change his mind and come back to a decent country. Perhaps Bill might find him here, and if he did the extra bunk would come in handy. He said that somehow he didn't feel so lonesome with the other bunk above him, and, at night, he often thought that maybe Bill was in it.

His idea of what constitutes companionship may

appear a little crude to some of us, but after all it is our point of view that makes us happy or unhappy in this world.

I asked him if he thought Bill would be able to find him if he ever tried to, and he replied, "never you mind—you leave that to Bill. He's a wonder."

I regretted that he did not tell me all about what happened to Bill after he had left him on the island. This would not have been at all impossible if he had taken up the subject with the same compositional ability that he applied to the rest of his narrative.

His conversational charms were somewhat marred by a slight impediment in his speech, which he said had been acquired in trying to pronounce the names of all the foreign parts he had visited. Now that he had got settled down the impediment was becoming much less troublesome.

His brawny arms and chest were tattooed with fantastic oriental designs—fiery-mouthed dragons, coiling snakes in blue and red, and rising suns—which he said had been "put on by a Chink" when he was ashore for three weeks in Hong Kong.

The intricacy and elaborateness of the work indicated that a large part of the three weeks must have been spent with the tattoo expert, for he had absorbed much more of Chinese art in the short time he had been in contact with it than most modern scholars do in a lifetime.

In answer to a delicate allusion to his missing eye, he declared that it had been blown out in a gale somewhere off the coast of Japan. The terrible winds had prevailed for nearly two weeks, and his shipmate, Bill Saunders, had lost all of his clothes during the blow. The eye had gone to leeward and was never recovered. He said it was glass anyway, and he never thought much of it. How the original eye had been lost he did not explain. He wore what he called a "hatch" over the place where the eye ought to be, and said that "as long as there was nothin' goin' out," he "didn't want nothin' comin' in."

His "live eye," as he called it, had a wide range of expression. It was shrewd and quizzical at times, occasionally merry, and often sad. It would glitter fiercely when he talked of some of his "aversions," or told of wrongs he had suffered.

In his reminiscent moods it would remain half closed, and there was a certain far-away look that seemed to wander in obscurity. This lone eye was the distinguishing feature of a personality that seemed to dominate the little world around it.

I asked this ancient mariner if he had many visitors. He replied that the artists bothered him some, but outside of that he seldom saw anybody "'cept them I have business with, an' them two guys that live about three miles apart down the shore, an' the game warden that comes 'long oncet in a while. If people commence buttin' in 'ere I'm goin' to git out, an' go 'bout forty miles north, where I can't hear the cars. I ain't got much to move. The stuff'll all go in the boat, an' I'll just take my ol' flannel collar an' the sock I keep it in, an' skip."

He seemed to feel that he could properly criticize most of the people he had met, being practically free from frailties himself. Although he was somewhat of a pessimist, there was seldom much heartfelt bitterness in what he said. His mental attitude was usually that of a patronizing and indulgent observer. His satirical comments

were generally tempered with unconscious humor. He knew that out beyond the margins of the yellow hills lay a world of sin, for he had been in it, and his friend Bill was in it now. His philosophy did not contemplate the possible redemption of anybody he had ever met in the dunes, with one or two exceptions. He thought that most of them were "headed fer the coals."

"Happy Cal," was one of his pet aversions, and from a human standpoint, he considered him a total loss. They had once been friends, but Sipes was now "miffed" and there was rancor in his heart. Cal had "gone off som'eres," but the wound was unhealed. The trouble originated over the ownership of a bunch of tangled set-lines, which had got loose somewhere out in the lake, and drifted ashore some years ago. It was conceded that neither of them had owned the lines originally, but Cal thought they ought to belong to him as he had seen them first.

Sipes descried the soggy mass and carried it up the beach to his shanty. Cal came after the prize before daylight the next morning, but found that he had been forestalled. Sipes spent two days in

getting the tangles out and had stretched the lines out to dry. One night they were mysteriously visited and cut to pieces.

A few days later a piece of board, nailed cross-

wise to a stake which was driven into the sand, appeared about a mile down the shore, between the two shanties. On it was the crude inscription:—*"The Partys that cut them lines is knone."*

While protesting that he was perfectly inno-

cent, Cal looked upon this as a deadly personal affront, and the *entente cordiale* was forever broken.

After this Sipes bored a small hole in the side of his shanty, through which he could secretly reconnoiter the landscape in Cal's direction when occasion required. He was satisfied that Cal would be up to something some day that he would catch him at, and thus even the score.

I had noticed a similar hole in the side of Cal's hut, during a day that I had spent with him two years before.

Since the disappearance of Cal the old man had used the peep hole to enable him to avoid the visits of a certain other individual with whom he had become disgusted. Through it he would study any distant approaching figure on the shore that looked suspicious, with an old brass marine spy glass, that he said "had bin on salt water." If he was not pleased with his inspection, he would quietly slip out on the opposite side and disappear until the possible visitor had passed, or had called and discovered that Mr. Sipes was not in. He referred to his instrument as a "spotter," and

claimed that it saved him a lot of misery. While more refined methods of accomplishing such an object are often used, none could be more effective.

After learning what the orifice was for, I always felt highly flattered when I found my old friend at home, although I sometimes had rather a curious sensation, in walking up the shore, feeling that far away the single brilliant eye of old Sipes might be twinkling at me through the rickety old spy glass. Astronomers tell of unseen stars in the universe, which are found only with the most powerful telescopes. These orbs, isolated in awful space, may be scrutinizing our sphere with the same curiosity as that behind the little spotter in the dim distance on the beach.

I made a practice of taking a particularly good cigar with me on these expeditions, especially for Sipes, which may have helped to account for his almost invariable presence when I arrived. He would accept it with a deprecating smile and a low bow. If the weather was pleasant he would seat himself outside on the sand, with his back against the side of the shanty, and extend his feet over the crosspiece of a dilapidated saw-buck

near the door. He would carefully remove the paper band from the cigar, light it, and tilt it to a high angle. After a few whiffs of the fragrant weed, he once sententiously remarked, "Say, this is the life!—I'd ruther be settin' right 'ere, smokin' this 'ere *see*gar, than to be some famous mutt commandin' a ship."

The cigar bands were always scrupulously saved. He hoped eventually to get enough of them to paste around the edges of a picture which was stuck up on his wall opposite the bunks, and was willing to smoke all the cigars that might be necessary to furnish the requisite number of bands for this frame, which he thought would "look fine." The picture had been taken from the colored supplement of some old sporting journal, and depicted two prominent pugilists in violent action. When he had "cussed out" nearly everybody else, he would take up the case of one of these champions, who had gone into the ring once too often. His ornate vocabulary came into splendid play on these occasions, and the unfortunate "pug" had no professional reputation left when the old man had finished his remarks.

There was an interesting and formidable array of armament in Sipes's shanty. In one corner stood an old-fashioned muzzle-loading, big bore shotgun, weighing about sixteen pounds, with rusty barrels and one broken hammer. The stock had once been split, but had been carefully repaired and bound with wire. It was a murderous looking weapon.

A heavy rifle of antiquated pattern was suspended from a couple of hooks above the bunks, but the old man explained that this piece of ordnance was "no good," as he "couldn't git no catritches that 'ud fit it, an' it 'ad a busted trigger an' a bum lock." He had traded some skins for it years ago, and "the feller that 'ad it didn't 'ave no catritches neither. I was stung in that trade, but them skins wasn't worth nothin' neither. Some day I'll trade it off to some feller that wants a good rifle."

On the shelf was a sinister looking firearm, which had once been a smooth-bore army musket. The barrel had been sawed off to within a foot of the breech. This he called his "scatter gun." It was kept loaded with about six ounces of black

powder, and wadded on top of this was a handful of pellets which he had made out of flour dough, mixed with red pepper, and dried in the sun. He explained that, at three rods, such a charge would go just under the skin. "It wouldn't kill nothin', but it 'ud be hot stuff." He was keeping it "fer a certain purpose," the nature of which he refused to divulge.

The intended destiny of the "hot stuff" was suggested by a story I afterwards heard from "Catfish John." It seems that an eccentric character occasionally roamed along the beach who was a theological fanatic. He had tried to convert Sipes, and had often left tracts around the shanty when the owner was absent. He was intensely Calvinistic and utterly uncompromising in his beliefs. John did not consider that he was "quite all thar." This unkempt individual projected his red bushy whiskers and wild eyes through Sipes' open window one night.

"Do you believe in infant damnation?" he roared.

"Wot?" asked the dumfounded Sipes.

" 'Cause if ye don't yer jest as sure to go to hell

as the sun is to rise tomorrer mornin'," the intruder continued. He then left as suddenly as he had come. "Sipes sailed a pufectly good egg after 'im, but it didn't stick," remarked John.

It was Sipes's custom to take the old shot gun over into the marshes of the back country, and shoot ducks in the fall and spring. His ideas of killing ducks were worthy of the Stone Age, for it was meat that he sought, and not sport. He always "killed 'em settin'," and would "lay fer 'em 'till fifteen er twenty got in a bunch, an' then let 'em 'ave both bar'ls.

"I don't allow nobody but me to shoot that gun. It kicks like it was drivin' some spiles, an' so does my scatter gun. When it goes off one end is pretty near as bad as the other. I fetch them ducks home an' salt down them I can't use right off, an' sometimes I git enough to last all winter."

I suggested that lighter charges might cause less recoil, and do just as much execution.

"Not on yer life," he replied, "if they ain't no kick behind they won't be no kick forrads, an' the shot won't go no distance. Now just lemme show you."

In spite of my protest, he got the gun out, loaded it far beyond its maximum efficiency, and fired it at a passing flock of sandpipers, that were fortunately beyond range. The report was like a thunder clap, and when the echoes died away, and it was evident that the innocent little creatures had escaped unharmed, he explained that he "wasn't any good at shootin' 'em flyin', but them shot made 'em skip all right."

I had my own suspicions as to what had made the little birds "skip."

His supplies of ammunition were obtained for him at the general store in the sleepy village by his old friend "Catfish John," whose reward consisted in portions of the bloody spoil from the marshes.

Sipes's shanty would have been a most unpleasant place to approach if hostility should develop inside of it. He "didn't want no monkeyin' 'round that joint, an' they wasn't goin' to be none."

It was to the old man's credit that he let most of the wild life alone that he could not utilize. The crows, gulls, and herons along the beach did not interest him. The songsters and the little

shore birds were exempt on account of their size. They required too much ammunition, and it was too much trouble to pick them.

THE DISTURBER IN THE RAVINE

Occasionally a pair of eagles would soar around over the dune country. These he longed to kill, but he could never get near enough to them. The wary birds were inconsiderate, and "wouldn't never light, 'cept away off."

A "hoot'n owl" somewhere in the ravine caused

him many sleepless nights. Its prolonged and unearthly cries frequently startled him from dreams of his friend Bill off in the South Pacific, and he spent many hours prowling softly around among the trees in the darkness, trying to locate the offender. Probably the owl, in the wisdom of his kind, had kept the silent stealthy figure under observation, and was careful not to do any hooting within shooting distance,—certainly an example to be emulated. He usually resumed his lamentations when Sipes returned to his shanty.

The old man had this owl listed as one of his bitter enemies, and annihilation awaited the wily bird if he ever found it. "One hoot'n owl's too dam' many to have 'round," he declared. "This critter reminds me o' one night when I was on a ship off the coast o' South Ameriky.

"I was aloft on one o' the yard-arms, an' there was a little roll on the sea. I seen some long white streaks o' foam comin', about two points offen the lee bow, an' there was sumpen that shined in the moonlight mixed up in it. It seemed all yellow, an' about two hundred feet long, an' it flopped up an' down. When it got close, it opened

up a mouth pretty near half as big as the ship, an' let out an awful yell. It sounded like a hoot'n owl, only ten thousand times louder an' deeper. Then it dove down an' went under the ship. The sails all shook, an' my blood was froze, so I couldn't call out to the feller at the wheel, an' I dropped off on to the deck.

"I never found out what the cussed thing was. If I'd bin drinkin' very much I'd 'a' thought I had the jimmies. The wheel feller said he hadn't noticed nothin', but I did all the same, an' I'll never fergit it.

"I had some ter'ble experiences off down there in that part o' the gorgofy. We sailed fer months an' months, an' never seen nothin' but the big waves an' the sky. There was a lot o' latitude an' longitude, an' me an' Bill used to offen wonder, when we was roostin' out on the bowsprit smokin' at night, what 'ud happen if we butted into one o' them lines that's always runnin' up an' down an' sideways on them salt water maps.

"There was ter'ble perils all the time. Sometimes we'd run among icebergs, an waterspouts, an' cyclones, an' we wallered in bilin' seas, an' the

skies was black as yer hat, an' we got lost on the ocean a couple o' times, an' we got smashed up on that island I told ye about. You bet this lake's plenty wet enough fer me, an' I'm goin' to spatter 'round right 'ere, an' if Bill was only 'ere instid o' cavortin' 'round with them South Pacific floozies, I'd be all right."

Some of Sipes's many sea yarns sounded suspiciously like stories I had read in early youth, but I generally gave him the benefit of the doubt, as he did not need to be strictly truthful to be entertaining. In one instance he related a thrilling tale in which his experiences were practically identical with those of the hero in a favorite yellow covered treasure of years ago. I rather tactlessly called his attention to that fact. He at once replied, "Now you see how queer some things git 'round in this world. *I was that feller.*"

After that I considered comment hopeless, and simply listened.

Perhaps this lonely philosopher may have solved one of the problems of existence that have baffled more serious and deeper thinkers. He has perfectly adjusted himself to his environment, and his

life is complete and happy within it. Even his many aversions give him more pleasure than pain. His memories afford him abundant and pleasant society, and he is able, psychologically, to import his friend Bill when he needs him. Beyond these things he apparently has no desires. To use his own expression,—"the great an' pow'rful o' the earth 'as got nothin' on me."

That priceless jewel, contentment, is his, and the kindly fates could do little more for one who wore a crown.

"HAPPY GAL"

(From the Author's Etching)

HAPPY CAL'S SHANTY

CHAPTER VI

HAPPY CAL

ONE of the nondescript beach characters bears, or did bear, the somewhat deceptive sobriquet of "Happy Cal." His little shanty was on the sand about two hundred feet from the lake. The grizzled head, the gnarled rugged hands, the sinewy but slightly bent figure, betokened one who had met tempests on the highways of life. The deep set gray eyes were without luster, although they occasionally twinkled with quiet humor.

The slightly retreating chin, which could be discerned through the white beard when his profile was against the light, offered a key to the

frailty of his character. The power of combat was not there. He had yielded to the storms. He said they called him "Happy Cal" because he wasn't happy at all.

One dreary forenoon, when the black clouds piled up over the lake in the northwest and the big drops began to come, I went to Cal's shanty and was cordially asked to put my sketching outfit behind an old soap-box back of the door. It is needless to say that he had acquired this soap-box when it was empty. A long cigar and the recollection of a former visit put him at his ease.

The rain increased, and the breakers began to roar on the beach. The wind whistled through the crevices in the side of the shanty, and Cal went out to stuff them with some strips of rotten canvas that he had probably picked up along the shore. It was quite characteristic of Cal to delay this stuffing until stern necessity made it imperative.

He came in dripping wet, and asked if I happened to have a bottle with me. The stove was a metamorphosed hot-water tank. The rusty cylinder had been found somewhere among some

junk years before. He had made an opening in the front for the wood, a hole in the bottom provided for the draft and the egress of the ashes, and a stove pipe, that had seen better days, led through a hole in the irregular roof.

A fire was soon singing in the cylinder, and under its genial warmth Happy Cal became reminiscent.

"I've had some mighty strange experiences since I've bin livin' 'ere," he began. "About nine years ago they was a shipwreck out 'ere that raised the devil with all on board an' with me too. Nobody got drownded, but it would 'ave bin a good thing if some of 'em had.

"It was late in November an' nobody 'ad any business navigatin' the lake, 'less they 'ad to, 'cause when it gits to blowin' out 'ere at that time o' year, it blows without any trouble at all. A big gale come up in the night an' the breakers was tearin' away at a great rate, an' they swashed 'most up to the shanty. I was settin' up in the bunk playin' sollytare, an' wonderin' if the shanty was goin' to git busted up, when I thought I heard voices. I lit my lantern an' went out to see what

was doin' an' I saw a light a little ways out an' heard somebody yellin'.

"There was a big schooner almost on the shore. She was poundin' up an' down on the bottom in about five feet o' water. The big rollers was takin' 'er up an' smashin' 'er down so you could hear it a mile. Pretty soon the light went out an' after that four o' the wettest fellers y' ever seen came pilin' in with the breakers. I grabbed one of 'em that was bein' washed back agin', an' after that I got another one that seemed to be pretty near dead. The other two got out all right by themselves, but they was pretty shaky. They helped me git the others up to the shanty, an' they was a sight o' pity when we got 'em there.

"I put some more wood in the stove an' gave 'em all some whisky. They was about a pint left in a gallon jug that I got about a week before, with some money I got fer a bunch o' rabbits. I don't drink much, but I like to keep sumpen in the shanty in case somebody should git shipwrecked, an' it might be me, but I ain't got none now. I went on the water wagon about an hour

ago, an' I'm afraid I'm goin' to fall off if I git a chance.

"Them fellers lapped up the booze like it was milk, an' when they found they wasn't any more they got mad an' said I was runnin' a temperance joint. Then they asked me sarcastic if I had any soft drinks, an' I told 'em they'd find plenty outside. I fried 'em some fish an' they et up all the crackers I had. Then one of 'em got my pipe an' smoked it.

"They were a tough lot an' when they got all dried out an' fed they got to cussin' each other. I told 'em if they wanted to fight to git out fer I didn't want no scrappin' in the shanty. Then two of 'em clinched an' I shoved 'em out doors. Then the others went out an' pitched on both of 'em. After that they all piled inside agin' an' over went the stove. In a few minutes the place looked like it 'ad bin blowed up. We got the stove up after a while, but I lit out up the ravine an' stayed there pretty near the rest o' the night, waitin' fer a calm in the shanty. Hell was poppin' down there an' ev'ry minute I was expectin' to see the sides fly out.

" 'Long toward mornin' I took a sneak down an' peeked in. Them sailors was all settin' in there quiet as lambs, playin' cards with my deck an' usin' all my matches fer chips. I opened the door an' spoke pleasant like to 'em but they told me to git out fer the place 'ad changed hands. After a while, when they found they couldn't make the stove work, they let me in an' we had some coffee."

There are some visitors who make calls, others who come and visit, and still others who make visitations. It was not difficult to classify Cal's guests as he proceeded with his story.

"It seems that them devils," continued Cal, "had started down the lake with a load o' slabs an' some lumber from one o' the saw mills up north. One of 'em's name was Burke, an' 'e got to scrappin' with the cap'n, a feller named Swanson, about the grub they had on board. The other two butted in an' said they wasn't goin' to eat no more beans, an' the feller at the wheel headed the vessel—the Mud Hen 'er name was—straight fer the coast, an' swore 'e'd hold 'er there 'till the cap'n 'ud tell where some canned things was that

'e knew 'e had on board hid, an' a' big jug that they seen 'im put on the night before they sailed. They was about a mile off shore when the wind struck 'em, an' one o' the wheel ropes busted, an' before they could git things fixed up they blowed in.

"They was all sore at the cap'n an' the cap'n an' the other two was sore at the feller at the wheel, an' 'e was sore at the whole bunch fer cussin' 'im, an' so when they all got soaked it didn't help things any, an' when they got dried out they begun beatin' each other up.

"Olson, the one that 'ad bin pretty near drownded, couldn't talk much English, but him an' me sort o' took to each other after a couple o' days, an' 'e told me all about the doin's on the boat.

"Swanson an' Burke took my gun an' went over in the back country an' shot some tame ducks an' brought 'em back to the shanty an' wanted me to fix 'em up to cook. When I was pickin' 'em on the beach the owners come over. They'd heard the shots an' they found some tracks an' seen where they was some feathers. I told 'em I didn't have

nothin' to do with it, but as I was settin' there undressin' the fowls they seemed to think I had, an' I had a lot o' trouble fixin' things up.

"All this time the ol' boat was layin' in the shallow water keeled over sideways, an' badly busted up. We climbed into 'er an' got out a lot o' stuff, an' that bunch was mighty glad to git the beans, an' so was I. We found the cap'n's jug an' the cans, an' that night things broke loose agin, an' they all went on a bat. They went the limit an' acted like a lot o' wild Indians. I poured about a quart out o' the jug into a bottle an' hid it in some bushes, but they got to that, too. I told 'em I was just tryin' to save it fer 'em till the next day, but they got sore about it. They only let me have two drinks from the whole jug.

"The next night they set the ol' wreck afire an' lit out. What they done that fer I can't make out. After she burnt down to the water, some big combers washed 'er up on the beach one night an' you can see what's left of 'er stickin' up out there yet. They was a lot o' good stuff in that boat fer a nice new big cabin fer me, an' I felt awful bad about it. I saw the tracks of two of 'em goin' up the

The Wreck of the "Mud Hen"

beach, an' the others 'ad gone off in the hills, an' I guess they'd 'ad another row. They carried off my gun an' my cards, an' I never want to see a bunch o' lunatics like that agin. I'd as leave take in a lot o' mad dogs as I would them geezers. I wish that dam' Swede at the wheel 'ad headed 'is ol' tub som'eres else, 'er sunk 'er out in the middle 'o the lake, instid o' shootin' 'er in 'ere an' fussin' me all up. Them fellers'll be about as pop'lar as a skunk if they ever come 'round 'ere agin."

The remains of the poor old "Mud Hen" were visible about half a mile down the coast. Her charred and broken ribs protruded from the sands that had buried her keel, seemingly in mute protest against final oblivion. The fate that evil company brings was hers, but her refuge is now secure.

Happy Cal had been born and educated in a southern city. At twenty he had fallen in love with a dark-haired, beautiful, and softly languorous creature, with dreamy eyes, whose faded and worn photograph he produced after a long search through the leaves of an old and very dirty book. The book, which he also showed me, was rather anarchistic in character, and its well-thumbed

pages may have considerably influenced Cal's lack of faith in things in general.

After the exchange of fervent mutual vows, he had shouldered a musket and answered the call of the cause that was lost on the battlefields of the sixties.

After many vicissitudes and many months of suffering and hardship, poor Cal, in a tattered uniform, found his way back through the mountains to the altar on which he had laid his heart. He found the raven tresses on the shoulder of another, and retreated into the soul darkness from which he never emerged. He was only partially conscious of the weary miles and aimless wanderings that eventually took him into the silence and isolation of the sand hills, where he elected to abide in secrecy.

The golden chalice had been dashed from his lips—he had drunk of bitter waters. His star had fallen, and, like a wounded animal, he had sought the solitudes, beyond the arrows that had torn him.

The sad, lonely years in the little driftwood hut had benumbed the cruel memories, but the problems of existence brought only partial forget-

fulness. Under the cold northern stars and during the winter storms, his seared and tortured soul strove for peace, but it came not.

His sole companion in his exile was a big gray and white dog. He had found the poor, half-starved, stray creature prowling around in the vicinity of the hut one night, and had taken him in. Community of interest had caused these two atoms to coalesce. The dog's name was Pete, and it was Pete who was the indirect and innocent cause of Cal's final awakening to what he considered a sad reality a year or two later.

Pete got in contact with a voracious bulldog, that came from somewhere over in the back country; and in the final analysis—in which the two animals participated—Pete was left in a badly mangled condition.

Cal found him, and happening to be near the shanty of a neighbor, several miles from his own shack, carried the unfortunate Pete tenderly to shelter.

It was through this neighbor, another hermit, with another history, that Cal got interested in a pile of old newspapers and magazines which had

been procured in some way by this isolated tenant of the sands, who still maintained a lagging interest in the affairs of the outside world.

During Pete's convalescence, Cal found in one

of these old papers an account of a women's rights meeting in his native city, in which his former ideal of beauty and loveliness had taken a prominent part.

Her picture was in the paper and Cal was dis-

illusioned. The finger of time had touched the love of his youth and she was ugly. The tender blossom of nineteen was a cactus at fifty. To use

A Cactus at Fifty

his own phrase—"she looked like the breakin' up of a hard winter." In addition to the picture, the report of the proceedings, during which his former affinity had violently attacked what Cal considered were the sacred prerogatives of the male

sex, extinguished the last lingering fond impression, and the lovely vision vanished.

He did not believe that women had sufficient intelligence to vote, and the idea of their taking part in sage political councils was repugnant to him. While he did not vote himself, he said that there "was plenty o' men to 'tend to them things, an' its foolish to allow women to git mixed up in the govament."

This wise and smug anti-suffragist thought that the female sex "should be allowed to meet, if they want to, but they hadn't ought a butt in on things that require superior intelligence."

The newspaper cut had done its awful work on Cal, and women's rights had completed the demolition of an ideal that had been cherished through the years. His idol had crumbled and turned to ashes, and his dog was now the only live thing that he considered worthy of affection.

The story had in it much pathos, but interspersed through it was a great deal of picturesque profanity, particularly in connection with the idea of women casting votes, which had aroused the dormant passions of his nature.

The storm was over. I left him a small supply of tobacco, promised to drop in again, and bade him good-bye.

Several days later, in talking with Sipes, I happened to mention Cal's sad life history. He laughed and said that Cal was a liar.

"The real facts is 'e lived over in the back country fer twenty years, an' 'e was chased into the hills by 'is wife an' mother-in-law fer good an' sufficient reasons. He handed me all that dope oncet about some girl 'e was stuck on some'res down south. It's all right fer an old cuss like 'im to set 'round an' talk, but 'e was just 'avin' dizzy dreams, an' you fergit 'em. If 'e'd only tell the truth, the way I always do, 'e wouldn't never have no trouble, an' folks would 'ave some respect fer 'im, like they do fer me."

A year elapsed before I again saw the little shanty. The drifting sands had partially covered it, and my knock was unanswered. Several boards were missing from the roof, and through a wide crack I saw that occupation had ceased. The bunk

was covered with débris. There were some empty cans on the floor and, I am sorry to say, a few bottles, but Happy Cal was gone.

Let us hope that the wave of fortune or misfortune that took this poor piece of human driftwood on its crest carried him to some far-off, sunkissed, and glorious shore, where there is no political equality, and where women have no rights.

Either he had spent a most pathetic and adventurous life, or he was one of the most delightful liars I ever listened to.

CATFISH JOHN"

CHAPTER VII

CATFISH JOHN

"CATFISH JOHN" lived several miles farther up the shore. He was nearly eighty—at least, so he thought. Rheumatism had interfered with his activities to a considerable extent, and his net reels on the beach were getting a little harder to turn as the years rolled on. He considered the invasion of the dune country by the newcomers a great misfortune, al-

though he was perfectly content to deal with them in a business way.

"Fifty years ago, when I fust come 'ere," he said, "this country was sumpen to live in. There was some o' the Injuns 'ere, but they didn't never bother nobody. Thar was lots o' game, an' things 'round 'ere was pretty wild."

"How did you happen to come here, John?" I asked.

"I come from down East on the Erie Canal, an' I traveled out 'ere to see some land a feller was tryin' to sell that 'e showed me on some maps 'e had. He said it was pretty wet, but it had thousands o' huckleberry bushes on it, an' the berries grew so thick the bushes all bent over with 'em.

"I didn't 'ave much money, an' I didn't expect to pay much out, but I thought I'd come out an' take a look at it. I didn't see no huckleberries, but it was wet sure 'nough. If I'd 'a' gone on it I'd 'a' had to gone in a boat an' feel fer the land with a pole, an' if I'd wanted to live on it, I'd 'a' had to growed some fins. It was a good thing fer that feller that he didn't git that thar land onto me afore I'd seen it.

"After I'd bin 'round 'ere fer a while, I built a cabin over on the river, five miles back o' here. I got some slabs from the lumber comp'ny that was skinnin' out the pine an' robbin' the guvament, an' put up a good house. I stayed thar 'bout ten years, I guess.

"One night somebody knocked at the door. I opened it, an' thar stood three fellers. I asked 'em in, an' we smoked an' talked fer awhile, an' I cooked 'em some pork. I had about fifty pounds outside in a bar'l, with a cover an' a stone on it.

"In the mornin' them fellers wanted to go fishin'. We went up the river a ways, an' chopped some holes in the ice, an' caught a lot o' pick'rel. We took 'em to the cabin an' put 'em on the roof to keep 'em away from the varmints. In the mornin' I got up, an' all that pork an' them fish was gone, an' so was them fellers. It's bin forty years that I've bin watchin' now, an' I haint never seen them fellers since."

John then relapsed into a reflective silence, and shifted his quid of "natural leaf," that was filtering down through his unkempt whiskers. "Them fellers" were preying on his vindictive mind.

"What do you do with them pitchers you make?" he asked.

"I just make them for fun."

"I don't see no fun makin' them things. Thar was a feller along 'ere in the spring that used to set under an umbreller, when it wasn't rainin'. He painted a pitcher o' me, an' then took it away with 'im. It had a lot o' paint on it, an' it was all rough. I don't think 'e amounted to much."

"Did it look like you, John?"

"I s'pose it did to him; 'e carried it off."

John knew most of the outcasts along the beach for many miles. He occasionally visited some of them, particularly Sipes, to obtain extra supplies of fish, with an old gray horse and a dilapidated buggy frame—both of which were also rheumatic. On the wheels back of the seat he had mounted a big covered box for the fish, which he peddled over into the back country. Some of the fish were very dead, and the whole box was replete with mystery and suspicion.

"After the second day," he said, "I sometimes give 'way them I haint sold." Even at this price, some of them were probably quite expensive.

Snuggled up against the bluff, near the shanty he lived in, was an odd-looking little structure that John used for a smoke-house. When his fish became a little too *passé* to permit of ready sales, or,

THE LITTLE SMOKE HOUSE

as he expressed it, "too soft," he smoked them. Thus disguised, they were again ready for the channels of commerce.

He generally included some smoked fish in his

load when he started out, and usually it was not their first trip.

While his thrift was commendable, it was always best to let the output of that little smokehouse severely alone, for its roof, like charity, covered a multitude of sins.

Sipes declared that he always knew when the old man "was gittin' ready to smoke fish, if the wind was right."

His nickname had been acquired because of the yellow slimy things which he procured from the sluggish river, when the storms prevented supplies from the lake. A prodigious haul of catfish was made from the river one spring by a settler, who turned the catch over to John to peddle on shares.

"I loaded up them fish, an' I peddled 'em clear to the Indianny line. I was gone a week, an' I sold 'em all. When I got back that feller said 'e hadn't never seen no fish peddled like them was."

I tried to get him to talk about some of the characters he had met in his travels, but he said he "didn't never ask no questions of nobody." Then, after a long silence, he remarked, reflectively, "I

guess them fellers that stole the pork prob'ly left the country."

Catfish John apparently relied on the heavenly rains, when he got caught in them, to keep him

JOHN'S METHOD OF TAKING A BATH

clean, and on the golden sunshine that followed them to remove the traces of these involuntary and infrequent ablutions.

I doubt if he suspected the existence of soap.

Such cleanliness as he possessed must have been in his heart, for it was invisible.

I once asked John to allow me to spend a day with him on one of his peddling trips to the village, and he cheerfully consented.

"I don't git lonesome, but it 'ud be nice to have somebody 'long," he said.

I was to meet him at five o'clock the following morning at Sipes's place. I inwardly rebelled at the unseemly hour, but those who would derive the full measure of enjoyment with Catfish John must not be particular about hours.

I rowed along the shore, and was at the trysting place promptly. Fortunately I had a slight cold, and was thereby better enabled to resist some of the odors that I was likely to encounter during the day.

Sipes was dumfounded when I explained the object of the early visit.

"You cert'nly must be lookin' fer trouble," he declared; "if ye want to spend a day like that, why don't ye go over an' set quiet 'round 'is smokehouse, instid o' bein' bumped along on 'is honey cart all day?"

The air was still, and the low, gentle swells out on the water were opalescent in the early morning light. Sipes had just returned from a visit to his set-lines and gill-nets, over a mile away in the lake. He had started about two o'clock, and his boat on the beach contained the slimy merchandise which we were to convert into what Sipes called "cash-money" during the day.

We went down to the shore to inspect the catch. Numerous flopping tails and other unavailing protests against uncongenial environment were evident in the boat. There were fifteen or twenty whitefish, about a dozen carp, several suckers, and a lot of good-sized perch, which had been found in the gill-nets. The set-lines had yielded two sturgeon, one weighing about thirty-five pounds and the other over fifty. These two finny victims dominated the boat.

"I swatted 'em when I took 'em in, but they seem to be gittin' gay agin," remarked Sipes, as he reached for an old axe handle lying near the bow. The struggling fish soon became quiet.

"There comes yer old college friend," he said, as he glanced up the beach. The rheumatic horse

was patiently pulling the odd vehicle along the shore, near the water line where the sand was firm, partially concealing the bent figure with the faded slouch hat on the seat behind him.

"I'd know that ol' hat if I seen it at the South Pole," said Sipes. "It turns up in front an' flops down behind. It's got some little holes in the top, through which some wind blows when 'e's wearin' it. He's 'ad it ever since I come on the beach, an' that wasn't yisterd'y, neither, an' they ain't no other lid that 'ud look right on John, an' they ain't nobody else that 'ud wear it fer a minute. He needn't never be 'fraid that anybody's goin' to swipe it, 'specially 'round 'ere."

After the conventional greetings, flavored with much bantering and playful innuendoes by Sipes concerning the disreputable society which some nice fresh fish were about to get into, the two worthies weighed the catch, in installments, on some steelyards with a tin pan attachment, which were kept in the shanty. Sipes made a memorandum with a stubby pencil on the inside of the door, where his accounts were kept. "I got so dam' many things to think of that I can't keep track of 'em

'less I jot 'em down," he remarked, as he slowly and laboriously inscribed some figures on the rough board.

John had a few fish in his box that he had found in his own nets that morning, and a few more that Sipes said "didn't look recent" and "must 'ave bin caught some time previous."

The fish that Sipes had brought in were turned over to John on a consignment basis. It was their custom to divide the proceeds equally. Sipes considered that old John was "pufectly honest about everythin' but cash-money an' fish." He therefore kept "strict 'count o' wot goes out an' wot comes back." The inside of the door was covered with a maze of hieroglyphics, the complicated records of previous transactions.

"If I wasn't strictly honest at all times," said Sipes, confidentially, while John was out of hearing, "I'd slip some hunks o' lead that I use fer sinkers on the set-lines down the gullets o' them sturgeon. I can git lead fer six cents a pound an' sturgeon is worth twenty. If anybody found the hunks they'd think they'd bin eat offen the lines, but of course I wouldn't do nothin' like that; an'

besides, them big fish has to be dressed 'fore they're weighed, an' they 'ave to be cut in chunks fer small sales. A sturgeon that only weighs about six or seven pounds an' don't 'ave to be cut open 'fore 'e's sold, can swallow a couple o' sinkers without hurtin' 'is digestion any."

After all necessary details had been attended to, we climbed into the seat and started. Sipes winked at me impressively, and his last words were, "Don't you fellers take in no bad money."

He had several ways of opening and closing his single eye, which were very different from winking it naturally. He would wink with the whole side of his face, thereby conveying various subtle meanings which words could not express.

As we departed, the old man, with a final wave of his hand, disappeared into his shanty to prepare his breakfast. John had brought him a few fresh eggs, and Sipes hoped that "they wouldn't hatch 'fore they got to the kittle."

The poor old horse had rather a hard time pulling the additional burden through the sand. This interesting animal was quite a character. He was somewhere in the early twenties, and his name was

"Napoleon." John had bought him from a farmer for ten dollars. The horse was sick and not expected to live, but it transpired that what he really needed was a long rest. This he was in a fair way of getting when John came to look at him.

The old fisherman built a little shanty for him, put a lot of dead leaves and straw into it, fed him well, and in the course of a few weeks the patient began to evince an interest in his surroundings. "Doc" Looney came over to see him and volun-

teered to prescribe, but John refused to permit Doc to give anything but an opinion. Sipes claimed that John had thereby greatly safeguarded the original investment.

"If Doc wouldn't give patients nothin' but opinions, most of 'em would pull through, but 'is opinions'll make me sick even when I'm well," Sipes declared.

Napoleon was finally able to get into the harness that was constructed for him out of various straps and odds and ends of other harnesses that John had picked up around the country. Several pieces of rope and frayed clothes-line were also utilized, and when it was all assembled it was quite an effective harness.

The convalescent was taken only on short trips at first, but he gradually became stronger, and, with the exception of a limp in his left foreleg, he got along very well. His speed was not great. He walked most of the time, but occasionally broke into a peculiar trot that was not quite as fast as his walk. His trotting was mostly up and down. Like many people, whom we all know, he was inclined to mistake motion for progress. He was

more successful when he recognized his limitations, and adhered strictly to the method of locomotion to which he was naturally adapted.

His intelligence might be called selective. He understood "Whoa!" perfectly, and obeyed it instantly, but "Giddap!" was not quite so clear to him. He could not talk about his rheumatic leg, and thus suffered from one great disadvantage that made him more agreeable to those around him.

I asked John how the horse happened to be called Napoleon, but he did not know. He was equally ignorant concerning the animal's eminent blood-stained namesake. He thought he "was some fightin' feller in Europe," but did not know "which side 'e was on."

The world execrates its petty criminals, and immortalizes its great malefactors. As Napoleon, for selfish ends, caused the destruction of countless lives, instead of one, his glory should reach even unto Catfish John.

If the poor little horse had been called "Rembrandt" or "Shakespeare," the name would have been just as heavy for him to bear, but it would suggest good instead of evil to enlightened minds.

He was, however, oblivious to all these things, and went on his humble way, thinking probably only of his oats and the queer smells that emanated from the fish-box.

We proceeded about half a mile along the shore, and took the road that led through the sand hills into the back country. When we got to the marshy strip, we bumped along over the corduroy for quite a distance, but the road became better when we got to higher ground. As soon as we arrived on firm soil, Napoleon stopped. A fat man with a green basket was advancing hurriedly along the edge of the thin timber, about a quarter of a mile away, and the horse probably surmised that his coming was in some way connected with a rest.

The fat man was a picturesque figure, and we watched his progress with interest. His *embonpoint* was rendered more conspicuous by the legs of his breeches, which were about twice as large and not as long as appeared to be necessary. The wide ends flapped to and fro about nine inches above his feet as he ambled along. The garment was ridiculous simply because it did not happen

to be "in style" at the time. A faint and mysterious whisper from the unknown gods who dictate the absurdities in human attire would immediately invest its masses and contours with elegance and propriety, and those we now wear would appear as outrageous, artistically, as they really are. The freaks of vanity are the mockeries of art.

"Them are high-water pants all right, an' some day I'm goin' to have some like 'em," remarked John.

It might be suggested that "trousers" are breeches which are in style, and "pants" are those which are not. Gentlemen wear trousers and "gents" wear "pants."

"That ol' feller lives in that brown house over in the clearin' yonder," said John. "His name is Dan'l Smith. He's got two sons, an' them an' 'is wife do all the work now, an' 'e's got fat settin' 'round an' eatin' everythin' in sight. He trots over 'ere when 'e sees me comin' an' gits fish. He's partic'lar 'bout 'em bein' fresh, an' 'e likes to git 'em when I first start out. He's a good customer, but 'e owes me a lot o' money. He says 'e's got

some money comin' from a patent he's inventin', an' I'll have to wait awhile. This patent's to keep flies offen cows when they're bein' milked, but I ain't never seen it work. He drawed it all out on some paper oncet, to show me, but I don't know nothin' 'bout patents, an' I couldn't see just how it went. It's some kind o' thing with little oars on it that 'e winds up an' fastens on 'em, an' then it goes 'round an' 'round. The little oars are all sticky with some goo 'e puts on 'em, an' the flies that don't go 'way, when the little oars come 'round, git stuck on 'em, an' can't git off. The contraption's got some guide sticks on behind, an' when the cows switch their tails, they have to switch 'em back'ards an' forrads, instid o' sideways. There's some parts of it that 'e's keepin' secret, so's none o' them fellers down to the store'll git the patent fust."

"Good mornin', Dan'l!" said John cheerily, as the fat man came up, much out of breath; "did ye have a hard time gittin' through?"

"I got through all right, but it's a good ways over 'ere from the house, an' I ain't as frisky as I was oncet, an' I'm 'fraid I'm gittin' a little rheu-

maticks in my legs. Wotcher got in th' box to-day?"

Old John patiently sorted over the fish for inspection. The fat man selected four, which he carefully put in his green basket, and covered with leaves. He then waddled away with them and we drove on.

"I don't never keep no 'counts," said John, "but Dan'l's got all them fish marked down som'ers, that 'e's got from me, an' keeps track of 'em. When 'e gits 'is money fer 'is patent 'e's goin' to fix it all up. Sipes says we can git slews o' them kind o' customers, an' 'e wants me to quit givin' 'im fish er else feed 'im on smoked ones fer awhile. He says if we try to fat up all the fellers we meet on the road, the fish'll all be gone out o' the lake 'fore we're through, an' 'e don't want to be in on it."

While Napoleon and I may have regarded the fat man and the green basket with some suspicion, John's faith seemed secure.

We approached a weather-beaten house standing near the road. A middle-aged woman in a gingham dress and brown shawl stood near the

fence. The nondescript rig had been seen coming. Travelers on the road in the back country are so rare that a passing vehicle is an event; it is always observed, and its mission thoroughly understood, if possible. In no case during the day were we compelled to announce our arrival.

"Got any live ones this mornin', John?" she asked.

"Anythin' ye like," he replied, as he raised the lid of the box. A bargain was soon struck, and actual commerce had commenced. John put eighteen cents into a big, greasy, leather pouch, the opening of which was gathered with an old shoestring. He carried it in his side pocket.

He then gave the lines a shake, said "Giddap!" to Napoleon, and we moved slowly on.

"That thar woman," said he, "has bin married to two fellers. The fust feller died right away, an' the last one skipped off som'eres an' never come back. She's got that little place an' 'er father's livin' thar with 'er. He's got money in the bank som'eres. He didn't like neither o' them husbands, an' now they're gone' e's' livin' 'ere. She's a nice woman, but she made it hot fer them

fellers, an' if she'll quit gittin' married she'll be all right. That house we're comin' to now b'longs to ol' Jedge Blossom. He's a slick one. I had some trouble with some fellers oncet, an' went to the Jedge's house to have 'im haul 'em into court over to the county seat. We got beat in the case an' them fellers got discharged by the court, but the Jedge said I owed 'im ten dollars. I didn't have no ten dollars to spare, but I told 'im I'd leave 'im a fish whenever I went by, so I must drop one off when we git thar."

We stopped in front of the house. The old man reached back into the box and pulled the slippery inmates over until he got hold of two that were near the bottom. When they came up they did not look quite as attractive as those I had seen in the boat. He climbed slowly and painfully down and carried them around to the back door. On his return he remarked that "them fish ain't so awful good, but they're a dam' sight better'n some o' the law that ol' bunch o' whiskers ladled out fer me over to the county seat. I never see 'im 'cept at the store when I go thar. The Jedge's got a turrible thirst, an' most always 'e's soused. I

gen'rally take the fish 'round an' give 'em to the housekeeper, er else leave 'em near the pump."

With another "Giddap!" we continued our journey.

About a quarter of a mile farther on we met a little cross-eyed man with stubby whiskers, carrying a big stiff satchel covered with shiny black oilcloth. It did not seem very heavy. He swung it lightly back and forth as he walked. He stopped and asked if we could direct him to "Sam Peters's place." He explained that Peters was a relative of his and that he had come to visit him. John told him that he had passed the cross road that led to his destination, and offered to give him a ride back to it, if he would sit up on the fish-box. The traveler gratefully accepted the invitation. When we came to the corner where the cross-eyed man was to leave us, he said that he "would like to buy a couple o' fish, an' take 'em over to Peters fer a present."

Evidently he desired in this way to repay John for his ride; and thirty cents dropped into the capacious maw of the greasy pouch.

The fish were wrapped up in a piece of news-

paper, and the cross-eyed man cautiously opened the satchel on the ground to insert the package. To our great astonishment a large maltese cat jumped out, ran a few yards, stopped, and gazed back at us with a scared look.

The cross-eyed man was much excited, but finally succeeded in capturing the animal. He then explained that it belonged to his mother-in-law. It "yowled so much nights" that after trying various other expedients, he concluded to carry it away and give it to Peters, who had once told him that he was fond of cats. He had got off at the railroad station, about six miles away, and had walked the rest of the way.

The cat and the package were soon safely enclosed and he started off down the road.

"That cat'll prob'ly eat them fish up on the way to Peters' place," said John, "but it's my business to sell 'em an' not to say what's done with 'em afterwards."

The cross-eyed man must also have had misgivings as to the security of the fish, for we saw him stop in the distance, and open the satchel, probably

with a view of separating the contents while it was still possible.

"I ain't goin' to stop at the next place," said John. "When I drive in thar the feller always comes out an' jaws about half an hour, an' then sometimes don't buy nothin'. When I go on by, if 'e wants a fish, 'e comes out an' yells fer me to stop. When 'e gits the fish 'is wife hollers fer 'im to hustle up an' fetch it to the house, out o' the sun, so I git away, an' thar ain't no time wasted."

The old man's acumen in this case resulted in the enrichment of the greasy pouch to the extent of twenty-five cents, without objectionable delay in the day's business.

We were now getting into the sleepy village, and the houses were nearer together. We stopped at several of them before we arrived at the general store. The male population was lined up in chairs on the platform under the awning, and a curious assortment of horses and vehicles stood around in the neighborhood.

None of the horses looked as though they would

run away if they were not tied, but all of them were securely fastened to hitching rails and posts.

We had a number of things to attend to at the store. A poor old gray-haired woman, who lived alone at the edge of the village, had requested John to "please see if there is a letter for me when you stop at the post office, and bring it to me on your way back, if there is one."

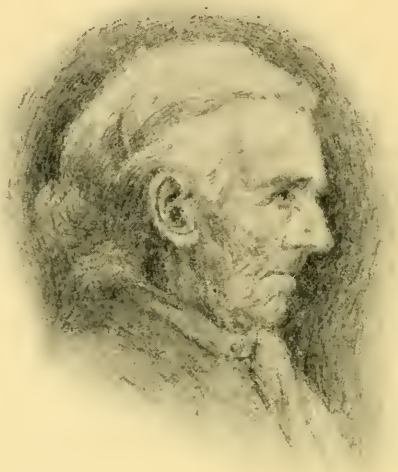
John had presented her with a fish, and said that he always gave her one when he went by, when he had a good supply.

"She's bin expectin' that letter fer nearly twenty years, from 'er son that went away, but it don't never come. She's always waitin' at the gate, when I go back, to see if I git it."

Alas, how many forlorn ones there are who wait, with hearts that ache, through the lonesome years, for letters that "don't never come!" Those who have gone may have wandered far in the world—they may have forgotten, or their fingers may have become cold and still, but there is hope in one heart that only ends with life itself. A pen may sometimes tremble, lips may sometimes falter, and eyes become dim, when the thought comes that

a mother's love will be "waitin' at the gate" when the other loves in this world are dead.

We tied Napoleon tightly with a big piece of rope which it would be utterly impossible for



"WAITIN' AT THE GATE"

him to break if he should attempt to run away, fixed a small bag of oats so that he could munch them, and went over to the platform.

John was greeted with solemn nods, good-na-

tured sallies, in which there was more or less wit—generally less—and various questions about "the fishin'." One old fellow had "bin over to the river" and "seen a feller with a couple o' catfish an' a pick'rel, but 'e'd bin all day gittin' 'em, an' 'e didn't need no wheelbarrow to git 'em home."

We went inside the store to make a few purchases, and to inquire for any mail which we might be able to leave with people who lived on the return route.

John bought several pounds of number six shot, three dozen heavy lead sinkers, and a pound of "natural leaf" for Sipes, and two pounds of natural leaf for himself. I was tempted to purchase a few cakes of soap and present them to John as a souvenir of the trip, but remembering that it is the tactless people on this mundane sphere that have most of the trouble, I changed my mind and purchased a big briar pipe for him. He was greatly pleased with it, and thought that "in about six months smokin' it 'ud git mellered up an' be a dam' fine pipe." We bought some crackers, cheese and a can of sardines for our lunch, which we ate out under one of the trees.

"I don't know what Sipes has to 'ave so many sinkers fer," remarked John. He wants me to git 'im a whole lot ev'ry time I come to town. I guess 'e must use 'em fer bait, fer I offen find 'em in 'is fish when I dress 'em."

The expression on the old man's face conveyed a suspicion that he was not quite as gullible as he might be, and that Sipes's strategy had not entirely deceived him. He probably had his own quiet way of adjusting matters on an equitable basis.

After lunch we spent a few minutes more with the wise ones in front of the store, deposited our parcels under the seat, released the reluctant horse and departed.

"Them fellers that set 'round that store don't 'ave nothin' else to do," said John. "They set inside in the winter time an' do a lot o' talkin', an' sometimes I set with 'em just to hear what's goin' on. When it's hot they set outside an' count the clouds, but they're always settin', an' they don't never hatch nothin'. Ev'ry year one or two of 'em drops off, an' thar ain't many of 'em left to what thar was ten years ago. They didn't none

of 'em amount to much, but I guess they're just as well off now as anybody else that's dead."

The contents of the greasy pouch had been sadly depleted at the store, but we got more "cash-money" from the few remaining houses in the village. The miller took three fish, and credited John's account with the amount of the sale. There was a debit on his books against John for flour and meal furnished during the winter.

It was getting late in the afternoon, and it was a long way to John's smoke-house, where the unsold portion of the stock must be "dressed an' put in pickle," preparatory to smoking it.

We returned by the same route as we came. The poor old woman was "waitin' at the gate," and turned sadly toward the house as we passed. She carried her cross in silence, and the picture was pathetic.

On the way back we saw a sharp-featured man with red hair, who had come out of a house and was waiting near the road.

"That feller," declared John, as we approached the possible purchaser, "gives me pains. He seen me goin' by all right this mornin', but 'e didn't

come out. He's a tight wad, an' 'e thinks I'll sell 'im fish fer almost nothin' before I'll tote 'em back. I've got 'em all trained but 'im. Now you just watch me."

When we stopped the man asked if we had "any cheap bargains in fresh fish."

"Yes," said John, "I have, an' I'll tell ye what I'll do. I hain't sold many to-day, an' I've got about twenty left. If you'll take the whole bunch, you can have 'em fer a dollar an' a half."

"I can use two of 'em, at ten cents apiece, if you'll let me pick 'em out," the man replied.

"Giddap!" said John, and we were once more on our way.

Pride is the most expensive thing in the world, and under various forms it dominates mankind. I could not help but admire John's resolute sacrifice of this opportunity to add twenty cents in "cash-money" to the greasy pouch, which sorely needed it, but evidently he was following a policy that had in it much wisdom.

After crossing the marshy strip, we went through the sand hills, and down the beach to Sipes's place, where I had left my boat.

We found him peacefully smoking out in front of his shanty, apparently without a care in the world.

John showed Sipes the fish he had brought back, and gave him the things he had bought for him at the store. When the account was all figured out, there was a balance of twelve cents in John's favor, which Sipes said "we'll make up next time." He was deeply disappointed that there was no "cash-money" coming.

Sipes considered the fish that were to go to the smoke-house "a dead loss, an' they'd soon be worse'n that." He wanted "nothin' to do with 'em after they struck the morgue." He looked upon the smoke-house as a sink of iniquity, from which nothing good could possibly emanate.

I thanked John for his kindness in taking me with him, and bade him good-bye. He and Napoleon departed, and soon faded away in the distance.

The old fisherman had retailed a great deal of the current gossip of the country to me during the day. Humor and pathos, happiness and misery, honesty and wickedness, and all the other ele-

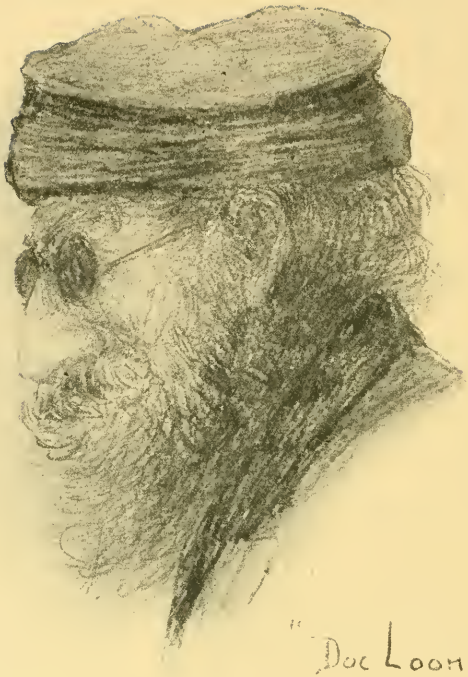
ments that enter into the stories of human lives, found their places in the day's recital. The old man has much benevolence in his heart. Most of his comments upon the frailties of his fellow-creatures were tolerant and charitable. They were usually tempered with sly quips, and a disposition to accord the benefit of doubt.

He frequently gives away fish, on his various trips, to people who cannot afford to buy them and to whom the food is most welcome, and extends credit to others who he knows can never pay. He does all kinds of little errands that his routes make possible, and altogether he is a simple, good-natured soul.

Like everybody else, he is an infinitesimal item in the scheme of creation, but there are many other items that are much more objectionable than Catfish John. Cleanliness may be next to godliness, but it is often associated with cussedness, so we can safely leave the matter of John's redemption to other agencies than soap.

Sipes once wisely remarked that "it's no use tryin' to tell ev'rybody wot to do all the time, an' I've quit. If ev'ry feller'd mind 'is own busi-

ness instid o' butt'n in an' tryin' to boss ev'rybody else, there'd be a lot less fussin' goin' on. The only way to git John clean 'ud be to burn 'im, an' they's a lot o' clean-lookin' people that'll come to that long 'fore he does. He's a nice ol' feller."



"Doc Looney"

CHAPTER VIII

DOC LOONEY

ANOTHER nondescript, whom I occasionally met prowling around among the hills and along the beach, was known as "Doc Looney." Catfish John said he was a "yarb man," and that he had been to see him sometimes when he "felt bad."

Doc seemed to have no fixed abode, and seemed disinclined to talk about one. He had rather a moth-eaten appearance, and wore an old pair of smoke-colored spectacles. He spent a great deal of time around the edges of the little marshes, back of the hills, looking for some particular "potential plant," which he was never able to find.

He gave me an interesting account of Catfish John's case, and said he hoped to operate on him in the spring if he didn't improve. His theory was that the knee-joints had lost the "essential oils" that nature had used for lubrication, and that reinforcements were needed. He intended to "make a cut" in the side of the left knee, and "squirt some

animal oil into it." If this worked, he would "oil up the other leg later."

The consent of the intended victim of this experimental surgery had not yet been obtained.

He had tried smart-weed tea, slippery elm, and snake-root on John, internally, and fish oil and rat musk externally, without being able to make him stop complaining. The smart-weed was to furnish the compound with the necessary "punch." The slippery elm was a "possible interior lubricant," and the snake-root was designed to impart the desired "sinuousness and mobility" to the affected joints. The fish oil, applied to the outside, was also to provide possible lubrication, and the addition of the rat musk was intended "to drive it in."

Before resorting to the operation, he was willing to try the mysterious herb that he had been looking for all summer. Possibly this might fix John up all right if he wouldn't consent to the operation. Doc hoped, however, that the operation could be arranged, as he had "never performed one on a leg, and would like to try it."

He believed that everybody, even when the

general health was good, should "take some powerful remedy occasionally. It would explore the system for imperfections, find disease in unsuspected localities, and probably eradicate it before it had a chance to form. Whatever the remedy was good for would be headed off and it was best to take no chances." He thought that the medicine used "should have some bromide in it." He did not know exactly what the bromide did, but "anyway its a dam' good chemical, and it ought to be used whenever possible."

He had what he called a "spring medicine" which I could have for half a dollar. He stated that the compound contained "ten different and distinct sovereign remedies and the bottle must be kept securely corked." The remedies were all "secret," and "seven of them were very powerful." He had known of cases "in which a few doses had destroyed two or three diseases at once, and had undoubtedly prevented others." Used externally, it "made an excellent liniment for bruises and sprains." It was also "good to rub on eruptions of any kind."

He thought that a little whisky might help a

patient of his if he could get it to him that afternoon, and asked if I "happened to carry any." He suggested that I bring some the next time I "happened along, as it might be very useful." He seldom used it himself, except when he had "stummick cramps," but these were "likely to come on 'most any time"—in fact he had had quite a severe attack about an hour before, and this was what had reminded him of it.

He told me a long story about his matrimonial troubles. He had been married twice, to unappreciative mates. To use his own expression, he had been "fired" in both instances, but they were now trying to find him again. He was a much abused man. He had been badly "stung," and was now "hostile toward all females." He did not intend to get caught in their toils again—and probably there is not much danger that he will be.

My private sympathies were entirely with these unknown irate women who had resorted to the radical methods of which Doc complained.

He had met with some very difficult cases during the past few years. Some of them "presented symptoms which had never been heard of before."

In such cases it was his custom to give the patient "a certain solution that would produce convulsions," and, as he was "particularly strong on convulsions," he was usually "able to cure these in a short time." When the convulsions stopped, the unknown symptoms would usually disappear.

He had endeavored several times to get Catfish John to try this method, "but for some reason he didn't want to do it." His fees in John's case had consisted of the entrée of the smoke-house that contained the fish which had become too dead to be peddled. He did not think much of the fish, but declared that he had got a large one there the week before, "an' some of it was all right."

Sipes once suggested to John that he smoke some fish " 'specially fer the Doc," and if he was not willing to do it, he would come up some day and do it himself. He would "smoke some that 'ud finish the Doc in a few hours." John objected to this and thought that the "Doc ought to have the same kind o' smoked fish that other people got." Sipes replied that this was "pufectly satisfactory" to him.

After discoursing at length on some wonderful

cures which he had effected, in cases that "the reg'lar doctors had given up," and the "marvelous potentialities" of some of his secret herb extracts, and "saline infusions, even when given in small doses," Doc would disappear in the gray landscape—probably absorbed in his reflections upon the "general cussedness of womankind" and the futility of medical schools.

I was always apprehensive when he went in John's direction, but as the old fisherman looked comparatively well when I last saw him, it was evident that Doc had not yet operated.

"You know its far be it from me to knock anybody," said Sipes one morning, "but this Doc Looney gives me a big chill. He's always moseyin' around, an' never seems to be goin' anywheres.

"Oncet 'e come here an' borrowed a kittle. He took it off up the shore, an' that night I seen 'im with a little fire that 'e'd built on the sand up next to the bluff, near some logs. He was roostin' on one o' the logs, studyin' sumpen that was in the kittle. I sneaked up unbeknown, an' watched 'im fer a long time. He kept puttin' weeds an' han'fulls o' buds in the kittle an' stirrin' the mess with

a stick. Every little while 'e'd taste o' the dope by coolin' the end o' the stick an' lickin' it. Before I seen 'im doin' this I thought 'e might be mixin' pizen. He was mixin' sumpen all right,

fer after a while 'e got the kittle offen the fire an' let it cool a little; then 'e dreened it into a flat bottle through a little birch bark funnel, an' hid the bottle under a log, an' covered it up with sand.

He took my kittle an' stowed it in some thick brush, an' went off up the ravine.

He's bin doctorin' ol' Catfish, an' 'e's always talkin' 'bout operatin' on 'im. There ain't nothin' the matter with the Catfish, 'cept 'e's got cricks in 'is legs, an' they bend out when 'e walks. All 'e needs to do is to set down instid o' standin' up, and 'is legs won't bother 'im. He comes along 'ere oncet in a while, with that ol' honey cart that 'e loads them much deceased fish into that 'e peddles. It ain't no rose garden, an' I always stay to wind'ard when 'e's 'round. The next time 'e comes I'm goin' to tell 'im wot I seen the Doc doin'. The first thing Catfish knows Doc'll dope 'im with that stuff in the bottle, an' then go after 'im with a knife. There ought to be a law aginst fellers like that. He's full o' bats, an' 'e ought to be put som'eres where they could fly without scarin' people.

"I never got my kittle back. I went an' looked where I seen 'im hide it, but 'e'd got to it first, an' I ain't seen it since. The next time the Doc comes up 'ere fer a kittle 'e'll git it out o' the air, an' 'e'll recollect it the rest of 'is life.

"There was a funny lookin' female come along the beach a couple o' years ago. She asked me if I'd ever seen a man 'round 'ere with colored glasses, an' I'll bet she was on the trail o' the Doc.

She had three or four long wire pins stickin' through a pie shaped bunnit, with a dead bird on it. She didn't look good to me an' I'd hate to 'a' bin the Doc if she ever got to 'im. I told 'er I wasn't acquainted with no such person. I may not like the Doc, but I wouldn't steer nothin'

like that ag'inst 'im, even if 'e did swipe my kittle. She asked me about a thousand questions. The lake was calm an' there was a lot o' places out on it where some breeze was puffin', an' there was a lot of other places where it was all still an' glassy. She wanted to know what made them little smooth spots, an' I told 'er that them places showed where I cut ice out last winter."

Catfish John said one day that "the feller that hates the Doc the worst 'round 'ere is Sipes. He gave Sipes some medicine oncet when 'e was feelin' poorly. It was some 'e'd bin usin' fer a horse. He said Sipes 'ad got pips, an' would need a lot o' doctorin'. He kept takin' it fer about a week, an' when 'e went out on the beach one day 'e thought 'e met 'imself comin' back, an' 'e quit takin' it. I guess the dope was too strong fer 'im. After that they had a fuss about sumpen else, an' the old man didn't have no use fer 'im. Sipes located a big hornet's nest som'eres up in the woods. He went thar one dark night an' slipped a bag over it so the hornets couldn't git out, an' carried it into the ravine to a little path that the Doc always used when 'e went to see Sipes. He

fastened it in a bush, close to the path, so the Doc 'ud flush 'em when 'e come by. He come through several times but thar was nothin' doin. Sipes said the reason they didn't sting the Doc was that they was all friends o' his, an' they was all the same kind o' critters 'e was. He hoped they'd swarm on the Doc an' chase 'im out o' the county, but like a lot of 'is plans it didn't work."

Sipes's theory of the existence of a state of natural affinity between Doc and a nest of hornets, seemed to amuse old John immensely.

"The Doc seems to think I'm goin' to let 'im tinker my knee, but I ain't. He gen'rally leaves some dope that 'e cooks up 'imself fer me to take, when 'e comes up 'ere, but I throw most of it out back o' the smoke-house. I let 'im leave it fer I don't want to make 'im feel bad. He keeps whettin' a funny lookin' knife when 'e's 'ere, an' hintin' about sumpen 'e wants to try on my leg, but I ain't goin' to have no cuttin' done. I've got a new cure that I'm tryin' now, that I ain't sayin' nothin' about."

One cloudy day during the following fall, my friend Sipes and I went up the shore a few miles,

and landed our boat near the opening of a deep heavily wooded ravine, through which a small creek flowed to the lake.

I intended making some sketches in the neighborhood, and Sipes offered to accompany me. He took his gun, as he thought there might be some "patritches" in the ravine.

We pulled the boat well up on the beach, and picked our way along through some pine-trees and underbrush, following a narrow trail that crossed the stream several times. We had proceeded perhaps a couple of hundred yards, when we came to a queer looking structure, built into the side of the ravine, which had been partially hollowed out. It was rudely constructed of planks, short boards, and various odds and ends of building material, which had evidently been gathered up on the beach. It was about twelve feet long and possibly nine feet wide. There were two windows and a door that hung on rusty hinges. One hinge had lamentably failed to meet the necessary requirements and had been reinforced with a heavy piece of leather, which had once been a part of an old boot.

It began to rain, and as the little hut was apparently deserted, and seemed to offer a convenient shelter, we ventured to investigate the interior. After removing a large accumulation of dead

THE DESERTED LABORATORY

leaves and sand in front of the door, we pulled it open and looked in.

There was a small rusty old stove, in a bad state of repair, two broken chairs, and a table in the

single room. An irregular row of bottles, of various shapes and sizes, filled a long shelf, and sundry worthless looking utensils were scattered about. At the end of the room was a mildewed husk mattress on some boards which had been nailed to the ends of four pieces of wood, about two feet from the floor. Suspended from nails which were driven along the boards next to the roof, were large bunches of dried plants of various kinds.

"This is 'is nest all right, an' this is where 'e makes 'is dope," remarked Sipes, and a minute later he held up a battered looking object, and exclaimed, "Dam'd if 'ere ain't my kittle!"

We had indeed stumbled upon an abandoned secret retreat of Doc Looney. Like an illicit still, his laboratory had been hidden in untrodden recesses, away from the paths of men. In this quiet spot he could meditate, and compound his mysterious "powerful remedies" with little fear of intrusion by his female pursuers, and out of it he could emerge and roam where his fancy led.

Into this deep seclusion the turmoil of warring schools of medicine, and the abuse of a captious

world could not come. His medicines and his theories were beyond criticism. Such a fortress enabled him to concoct ammunition with which to offer battle to the diseases of his kind, without fear of capture and incarceration, which he may or may not richly deserve.

If the motto "*similia similibus curantur*" be true, some terrible human suffering could be alleviated with some of the stuff we found on the shelf. Many of the bottles were empty, but we removed the stopper from one of them, and regretted it. We were assailed by a pungent and sickening odor. Sipes remarked that "sumpen must 'a' crawled in that bottle an' died." On taking it out to the light we discovered that it was about half filled with angle worms, whose identity was practically gone.

"I know wot that stuff is," said Sipes, "its angle worm ile. That old cuss said oncet 'e was goin' to squirt some in John's knees to make 'em supple, when 'e operated on 'im, but John wouldn't let 'im monkey with 'em."

There were no labels on the bottles, with the exception of one which was marked "Bromide." The remaining *materia medica* could not be identified.

We examined the odd pieces which had been used in building the shanty, with much interest.

The widely scattered driftwood, along the miles of curving sandy shore, suggests many reflections to the imaginative mind. Trees that have been washed from their footholds on the margins of distant forests—logs, slabs, and wasted material of many kinds, incident to man's destruction in the wilderness—broken and lost timbers from piers, bridges and wrecks—are among the spoils of winds and seas that are relentless.

Nature is as regardless as she is beneficent, and her storms and her sunshine do not discriminate.

Some lonely dweller on the coast may have builded too near the abodes of the water gods, and, in their anger they may have reached out long arms to his humble home, and flung the fruits of his toil among the mysteries of the deep. Some unfortunate bark may have lost its battle with the tempest, and given its sails and timbers to the waves.

When the vagrant breezes found them, they may have wandered for many months on the wide expanse. They may have floated in on the crests

of the singing ground swells—touched strange shores and left them—drifted lazily in summer calms, and offered brief respites to tired wings far out on the undulating waters. They may have been buffeted by savage seas under angry skies, and battered among the ice fields by the winter gales.

Like frail and feeble souls, unable to master their course, the lost and worn timbers have been the sport of the varying winds and the playthings of chance. They have at last found refuge and quiet on the desolate sands. Living forces have thrown them aside and gone on.

Sometimes a name, a few letters on a plank, or a frayed piece of canvas, will offer a clue to its origin, and tell a belated story of misfortune somewhere out on the trackless deep.

Outside, on one of the boards used in the construction of the rude little hut, we deciphered the name "Pauline Mahaffy." It had evidently come from the hull of some proud craft that had once ridden nobly through the white-caps, and dashed the foam and spray before her. Alas, to what a prosaic end had her destiny led her! Immured in

a deep ravine, her last sad relic—her honored name—was a part of a disreputable shanty, and her last friend had left it to fade into oblivion.

Even unto his solitude had femininity, in a modified form, pursued poor Looney. Sipes, unpoetic and irreverent, found much joy in the name. He chuckled in his glee, and mingled his mockery with his quaint philosophy.

"Oh, Lord, if only that funny lookin' female I told ye about, that was huntin' the Doc, could see this! She'd spend a few seconds on the Doc, an' the rest of 'er life trackin' Pauline. She wouldn't know nothin' about names on ships, an' she'd think the Mahaffy woman 'ad snared 'im an' took 'im away, an' 'e was that fond of 'er that 'e put 'er name on 'is shanty.

"Mebbe she landed on 'im 'ere, an' 'e lit out up the ravine. Them that live in this world can make all the trouble fer themselves they want, an' they don't need the help o' nobody else, an' I'll bet the Doc thought so too, an' scooted. "Pauline Mahaffy! Gosh what a name! Wouldn't that blow yer hat off? He ought to 'a' hunted fer a board that 'ad 'Idler' or sumpen like that on it

that wouldn't never make no trouble. Most o' the pleasure boats that gits wrecked is named 'The Idler.' They'r mostly run by lubbers, an' 'e wouldn't have no trouble findin' one if 'e wanted a nice name to put on that old dog house. 'Idler' 'ud just mean that 'e wasn't workin', an' you bet 'e ain't, but 'Pauline Mahaffy' don't sound good to me. I seen the old cuss less'n a week ago, an' 'e must 'ave another coop som'eres else. This ravine 'ud be a good place to set some bear traps 'round in. There's no knowin' wot they might ketch."

When it stopped raining we continued our journey up the ravine to higher ground, and walked through the woods. We finally emerged into the open country, made a long detour, and returned to the boat.

A sketch had been made of the shanty, but we had found no "patritches." The old man was greatly elated over the recovery of the long lost "kittle." Its present value was at least questionable, but he was happy, and he had carried it tenderly during the trip.

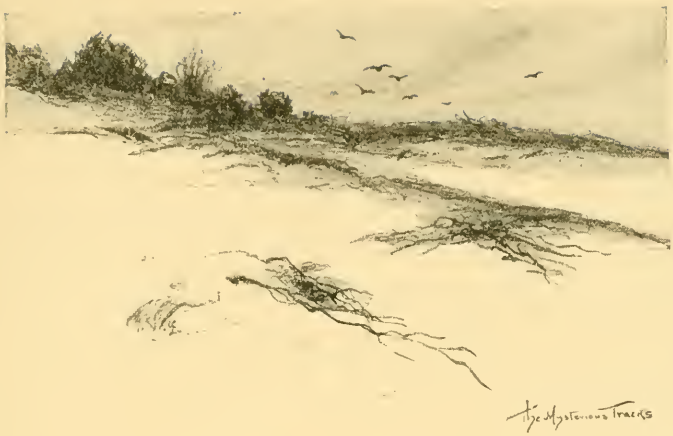
"When I git home," said he, "I'll git some sodder an' plug it up. If you've got some o' them

kind of *see*gars with you, that you gave me the other day, I think it 'ud be nice fer us to smoke one on the strength o' me findin' my kittle."

The disreputable utensil was stowed carefully in the boat, with the rest of our belongings, and finally reached its rightful home.

The adaptation of particular minds to particular forms of activity is one of the most difficult problems of our highly specialized social structure. Happiness and achievement are largely dependent upon mental and physical harmony between the man and his task. The learned professions, like all other mediums of human activity, carry with them in their progress the "misfits" and the "by-products" which are inseparable from them.

Poor old Doc Looney is both a misfit and a by-product. He is innocently drifting in waters that are beyond his depth, and while he is of little value in the world, his "powerful remedies," "potential herbs" and "infusions" will probably find but few victims.



CHAPTER IX

THE MYSTERIOUS PROWLER

ONE fall there were queer happenings in the dune country. The story is nearly twelve miles long, the details extending all along the shore, from Happy Cal's shanty to a point away north of where old Sipes sweeps the horizon through his little "spotter."

The tracks of some strange and unknown animal began to appear on the sand at different places along the beach. They were about three inches long, and nearly round, with irregular edges. The impressions were not very deep. They had

not been made with hoofs. They were too large for the imprints of a dog or wolf, and were too small, and not of the right shape for a bear.

No bird or beast could have made these tracks, that had ever been seen or heard of by anybody who inspected them. The denizens of the sand-hills, who had hunted and trapped among them for many years, were utterly amazed and dumfounded. Some marvelous thing had come into the country. All conjecture seemed futile, and there appeared to be no possible or plausible theory that would in any way explain the enigma.

The mystery became more and more impenetrable. Many superstitious speculations and surmises were indulged in by the old derelicts. They were deeply perplexed and completely at a loss to understand a situation that was becoming uncanny, and began to suggest some kind of witchcraft.

Extended search and diligent watch failed to locate the four-footed thing in the daytime. It seemed only to travel at night. Like the wondrous "Questing Beast" in the Arthurian legend, and the fabled ferocious white whale of the ant-

arctic seas, it became the object of vain and anxious pursuit. It seemed to elude miraculously all of the snares and stratagems devised for its capture. Evidences of its recent presence were apparent at the most unexpected times and places.

Attempts to trail it through the woods resulted in failure, as there seemed to be no scent that a dog could distinguish. The only tracks that could be followed were those that were visible on the smooth sand of the shore. They always eventually led into the woods on the bluffs and were lost. The unsolved riddle became more puzzling with the discovery of each new depredation, committed by the unknown marauder, and the fresh undecipherable imprints were seen somewhere on the beach almost every morning.

Once a half-devoured woodchuck was found near the mouth of a little creek that emptied into the lake, and a large fish, that had been cast in by the waves, was discovered, partially eaten, a little farther on.

Catfish John left half a pailful of dead minnows, which he intended to use for bait, under an old box. When he returned the next morning,

he found the box overturned, and the pail empty. His little smoke-house was invaded, the half-cured fish were gone, and the tell-tale tracks were all over the sand.

Late, one dark night, Sipes landed his rowboat on the beach. From some unknown source he had obtained a side of bacon, which he left, with some other things, in the boat, while he went over to his shanty to get a lantern. He puttered around for awhile, getting his lantern ready, and looking for some tobacco. When he went back to the boat with his light, he discovered that the bacon and the remains of some lunch that he had taken with him, had disappeared. The round tracks of the mysterious thief were around the end of the boat, and the trail led straight across the beach into the ravine. Three nights later a couple of dead rabbits, that he had hung up on the side of the shanty, were missing.

With this fresh outrage, Sipes went on the war-path. He loaded up his old shotgun, with double charges of powder, and some lead slugs, and lurked along the edges of the bluffs all night. He was beside himself with curiosity and rage,

and it would have gone hard with almost any live thing that he might have seen silhouetted between him and the dim light on the lake during his vigil. The baffling mystery was getting entirely too seri-

HE WAS "GOIN TO BUTCHER IT ON SIGHT"

ous, and was affecting him too much personally, to admit of further temporizing.

He went on several of these nocturnal expeditions, all of which were fruitless, and his sulphur-

ous comments on his failures to find what he was looking for, indicated the intensity of his eagerness to meet and annihilate "that cussed thing that 'ad rained down, or come in offen the lake, an' done all this." He "didn't care whether it 'ad scales, wings er tusks." He was "goin' to butcher it on sight."

"He was cert'nly dead sore," said Catfish John, in relating Sipes's part in the drama. "After 'e'd hunted it awhile, 'e thought 'e'd try an' trap this varmint. He got an old net an' spread it up over some sticks. Then 'e put some meat on a long stick under the middle of it, an' fixed it so the net 'ud fall down over anything that tried to pull away the meat. The net was to tangle the varmint all up, when it fell on 'im, an' 'e tried to git loose.

"The next day 'e went thar an' found them tracks all 'round an' the meat gone. Somehow the contraption hadn't worked. He set it agin, an' in about a week there was a big skunk in it, all messed up an' hostile, an' after that Sipes quit. He said that them fellers that wanted to trap that varmint could go ahead an' do it. He didn't

want nothin' to do with no more traps. He was goin' to wait 'till 'e saw it, whatever it was, an' plug it with 'is gun.

"He hunted 'round a whole lot at night, an' once 'e saw sumpen black, movin' along under the bluff. It was bright moonlight, but this thing was in the shadow. He took a couple o' pops at it, but it got away up in the brush. Sometimes 'e'd hear queer sounds outside 'is house in the night. He'd git up quick an' sneak out with 'is gun, but 'e didn't never find nothin'. The next mornin' 'e'd look for them funny tracks an' most always found some. Next 'e was goin' to put out some pizen, but 'e couldn't git none.

"Afterward the whole thing come out. It was Cal's dog that done it. He come 'long the beach one day when I was fixin' my boat. I had it up on the sand, an' 'ad poured a lot o' tar in it. I was tippin' it an' flowin' the tar 'round in it to catch all the little leaks in the bottom. I left it fer a minute, an' the dog got in the boat an' puddled all 'round in the tar. What 'e done it fer I don't know. Then 'e hopped out on the sand an' caked 'is feet all up, an' that's the reason 'e

made them funny tracks, an' that's why them fellers with the dogs couldn't follow the scent. He didn't leave no animal scent. The tar an' the sand killed it. He probly didn't like the way 'is feet felt, an' when 'e skipped out from 'ere 'e was prob'ly scart an' didn't go back to Cal's. He must 'av spent his time hidin' 'round in the woods in the daytime, an' at night 'e'd come out 'long the beach to git sumpen to eat.

"I didn't think of all this 'till some feller come 'long 'ere an' said 'e'd followed them tracks down to Cal's place an' found 'im settin' outside rubbin' 'is dog's paws with grease, an' tryin' to git big lumps o' tar an' sand off 'em. The dog 'ad bin gone about two weeks, an' Cal thought 'e'd gone off fer good. I'll bet Cal was glad to git 'im back.

"I'd oughter thought it out before, fer Cal come up 'ere one day an' asked me if I'd seen 'is dog, but I'd forgot all about 'is gittin in the tar, an' s'posed 'e'd gone off home when 'e left 'ere."

Pete's adventures had been varied and exciting while they lasted. He had added variety and interest to the community in which he lived, and

had really done but very little actual harm during his absence from home.

Sipes philosophically remarked that "everythin' comes to an end in this world, an' this 'ere dog 'll come to one, if 'e ever gits this way agin. I s'pose it's all sweet an' proper fer me to git a bunch o' bacon an' two rabbits stole, an' I s'pose I'm the only one that cares about them things I lost, but all the same, I ain't runnin' no animile restaurant, an' some day there'll be some dog tracks on this beach that 'll all point the same way, if that thievin' quadrypeed ever comes skulpin' 'round 'ere."

"J. Ledyard Symington"

CHAPTER X

J. LEDYARD SYMINGTON

A LONELY abode near the opening of a ravine, about four miles from Sipes' hut, bore the scars of many winters. It was not over twelve feet square. It had two small windows, a narrow door and a "lean to" roof. On the door was the roughly carved inscription—"J. Ledyard Symington, Tuesdays and Thursdays." Near this was nailed an old cigar box, with a slit in the cover. Lettered on the box was a request to "Please leave card."

I often passed this mysterious dwelling without seeing any indications of life, but one chilly rainy day I saw smoke issuing from the bent piece of stove-pipe, protruding through the roof. The fact that it happened to be Thursday helped to overcome my reluctance to disturb the occupant.

A cordial and cheery call to "come in" was the response to my gentle knock.

I found a rather tall, pleasant faced, watery eyed old man, with a gray beard, aquiline nose,

and shaggy eyebrows, who rose from a box on which he had been sitting before a small table. There was an unmistakable air of *noblesse oblige* in his polite offer of another box. His clothes bespoke the "shabby genteel," which was accentuated by a somewhat battered and much worn plug hat, that hung on a peg near the window back of the table.

I apologized for my intrusion, told him that I had had rather a long walk, and would be glad to rest awhile before his fire. He seemed interested in some sketches made during the morning, which he asked to see. His courtly air did not desert him when he confessed that he "hadn't had a smoke for a week." I handed him some tobacco. He fished a disreputable looking big black pipe out of some rubbish on a shelf, and was soon enveloped in the comforting fumes.

I was made to feel much at home, and his conversation soon lost its tinge of formality. He looked at me curiously and asked where I was from. When I told him, his eyes brightened, and he wanted to know what the principal society events had been during the winter. He said he

had only seen half a dozen papers in five or six months, and had lost all track of what had been going on.

Along one of the shelves at the end of the room were ranged several books on etiquette, and thirty or forty much worn novels, of the variety usually absorbed by very young ladies in hammocks, scattered around the shaded lawns of white flannel summer resorts, where the most intense intellectual occupations are tennis and dancing—books in which are recorded the "dashing devilish beauty of Cyril," with his "corking and perfectly ripping" ideas, and the bewildering charms of willowy Geraldine, the violet eyed heiress, with the long lashes, her many stunning costumes and clinging gowns. Flashing glances, nonchalantly twirled canes, faintly perfumed stationery, and softly tearful moods adorn the pages.

The limousine of the "Soap King" goes whirling by, which is placed at the service of the duke, when he arrives, incognito, to annex, matrimonially, the anxious millions that await him. The story takes us up wondrously carved staircases, among many palms, and into marble halls, through

which faint voluptuous music flows. The walls are lined with long rows of priceless old masters. Modern society novelists have found and given to the world many more Rembrandts and Van Dykes than those two humble toilers at the lower end of the social scale could have painted in a geological era. The duke eventually fails to produce his coronet, and the true love match is off. Cupid disappears through a stained glass casement. Dare Devil Cyril rescues the lovely Geraldine from under a fallen horse, or a purple touring car, and bravely carries her to another; her warm breath touches his cheek, and the wedding chimes come just in time to enable the fair reader to dress for dinner.

Oh, noble Cyril, and bewitching Geraldine!—your names may change on different pages, but ever and anon you flit through the countless cylinders of unnumbered presses. Like the lilies of the field, you toil not, neither do you spin. The triumphs and the failures of a thinking, striving world are not for you; its problems and its tears are not within your charmed circle, but He who marks the sparrow's fall, may gather even you,

with the rest of the created things, if there are other worlds to come.

Noticing my glance at the book-shelf, my host said, rather apologetically, "my library is not as large as I would like to have it. The fact is that I take a great deal of interest in social matters. I am unfortunately placed in a very peculiar and humiliating position. A great many years ago I fell heir to a large fortune, on the death of my uncle, and expected to devote my time entirely to society, and the pleasures of a gentleman of leisure. A lot of contesting relatives came on the scene, and for over twenty years the case has been in the courts. Several times I almost got cheated out of my inheritance, but it looks now as though I might get it.

"I keep in touch with everything that may be of use to me when I go into the world in the way that my uncle intended that I should. As social novelists generally reflect their own periods quite accurately, I feel that these books give me a very good idea of what is going on, and I get a great deal of pleasure out of them.

"I had a pretty good education, when I was

young, but I don't care so much about that, as I do for the ability to do things in proper form when I get what is coming to me. This enforced residence in these miserable hills, is just to make certain people think that I am dead. I am going to be alive at just the right time, and when I show up there will be a lot of surprises.

"As a matter of fact my ancestry is very ancient. I looked it up in Burke's Peerage when my uncle died, and found that I came from two of the very best families. On the other side I would be a baronet, but I don't want to go over there until I get my money. When I walk into my estates, I will do so unknown. I will suddenly reveal myself, and there will be a scattering of a lot of upstarts and false nobility who have been enjoying what rightfully belongs to me.

"I don't associate with these loafers that live around in these sand hills at all. They are low fellows, and I have no use for them. Every three months I go to a certain post-office, and get a money order for a certain amount, from a certain party who knows where I am, and is keeping track of things for me. It isn't as big a money order as

I would like, but I assure you that these conditions are only temporary, and when the proper time comes, you will find me gone."

I listened to the old man's story, which occupied most of the afternoon, with some suspicion, but with much interest. Some mysterious tea and a couple of damp soda crackers were served at this impromptu reception. He expressed much pleasure that I had called, and said that he hoped I would come again.

The impressions of my visit were really very pleasant, until, a few days later, they came under the fire of the withering sarcasm and barbed satire of Sipes, who from his lonely eyrie four miles away, across a bend in the shore, could observe the home of J. Ledyard Symington through his little spy-glass.

"That feller down there makes me tired. When 'e fust come in the hills, about six years ago, 'e put up a sign that said 'J. Simons.' He used to go 'way oncet in a while, an' ev'ry time 'e'd come back with a lot o' red an' green books that 'e'd set out on the sand an' read. He's got the society

bug, an' 'e thinks 'e's cut out fer to shine in new clothes all the time.

"Some day 'e says 'e's goin to live in a big house. He comes 'ere sometimes to see if I've got any newspapers. I got some oncet, to see if them Japs 'ad got them fellers in Port Arthur yet, an' Simons set down an' studied 'em all through to see wot the society push was doin'.

"He's got a box out in front that says to drop in cards. Oncet, just to show 'im that I was polite, I stuck a seven spot into it. I wouldn't hand nothin' above a seven to a guy like 'im. After that I laid out a lot o' games o' sollytare that I couldn't make work, an' I seen sumpen was the matter with my deck, an' then I recollected that cussed seven spot, an' I skipped back there when that ol' goat was snoozin' one night an' fished it out of 'is box. He's plumb nutty, an' 'e don't amuse me a bit. You fellers may like 'im, but I'll bet that when 'e gits 'is big house, you an' me won't be asked to it. Nothin' like him goes with me.

"He never has no whisky, an' I don't never see 'im out on the lake. He don't fish ner hunt, an' Hell! I don't know where 'e gits 'is money. After

'e'd bin down there a couple o' years, 'e changed the name on 'is door to 'J. L. Simons', an' after that 'e had it 'J. Ledward Simons' an' now its 'J. Ledyard Symington — Tuesdays & Thursdays'. I s'pose 'e'll 'ave 'Tuesdays & Thursdays' fer a part o' that name 'e's grad'ally constructin' if 'e keeps it up. Mebbe 'e means that on them days 'e's always out, but I ain't goin' to keep track o' the days o' the week fer *him,* and 'e and 'is ol' hard-boiled hat can go to the devil.

"If 'e has 'J. Ledyard Symington Tuesdays & Thursdays' fer a name 'ere, wot d'ye s'pose 'e'll 'ave it when 'e gits in 'is big house, that 'e's always tellin' about? I'll bet 'e'll 'ave a name that ye can't git through the yard. His plug hat makes me sick. Wot d'ye s'pose Dewey at Maniller would 'av said to a man with a lid like that? He'd a said *'Bingo!'* an' smashed it. After that 'e'd a told Gridley to begin' on 'im any time 'e was ready."

At this point the old man's comments began to be mingled with so much ornate profanity that it seems futile to attempt properly to expurgate his remarks. He declared that Simons was certainly

"bunk." "A name like wot 'e'd built out o' nothin' would finish anybody." He thought that something "ought to happen to everybody that got stuck on themselves, an' usually it did. All o' them geezers that live 'ere an' there on the shore, are prob'ly 'ere an' there 'cause it's better so fer them. With me its different. I'm 'ere 'cause I want to be 'ere. Simons 'll prob'ly light out some day, the same way Cal did. I'm goin' down there some night an' slip the whole darn deck in 'is card box, just to show my heart's in the right place."

Sipes was a captious critic, and to him the "mantle of charity" was an unknown fabric. It was evident that the social strata in the dunes had some humps that would never be leveled.

I passed the shanty some months later, but there was no smoke or other sign of habitation. The disappointed old occupant had evidently "lit out." The sad-looking "plug" was stuck over the top of the rusty section of stovepipe that had served as the chimney. It was now literally a "stovepipe hat"—that crown of absurdity among the follies of mankind, against which both art and nature have vainly protested through blinding tears.

I suspected the subtle facetiousness of Sipes in the apt decoration of the protruding piece of stove pipe with this melancholy emblem of departed gentility. Its top was ripped around the edge, and it moved languidly up and down in the varying winds, as if in mockery of inconstant fashion,

which is regulated by custom instead of artistic taste.

The building of the distinguished name had,

however, been continued, and the legend on the door was now, "J. Ledyard Symington-Symington, Bart." The reception days had been effaced. The old man may have achieved that point in his social aspirations when he "didn't care to know anybody who wasn't anybody." Like Don Quixote, he may have departed to battle with hostile windmills, or he may have walked into his estates "unknown," to mingle in phantom social functions in ghostly halls and silent chambers in the Great Beyond.

Perhaps there are no "Tuesdays and Thursdays" there, and calling cards and stovepipe hats are unnecessary. His blighted hopes, and those that may have ended in fruition, concern the widely distributed gossips along the coast no more.

While we may be interested and amused with the petty gossip, the rude philosophy, the quaint humor, the little antagonisms, and the child-like foibles of these lonely dwellers in the dune country, the pathos that overshadows them must touch our hearts.

They have brought their life scars into the desolate sands, where the twilight has come upon them.

The roar of a mighty world goes on beyond them. Unable to navigate the great currents of life, they have drifted into stagnant waters.

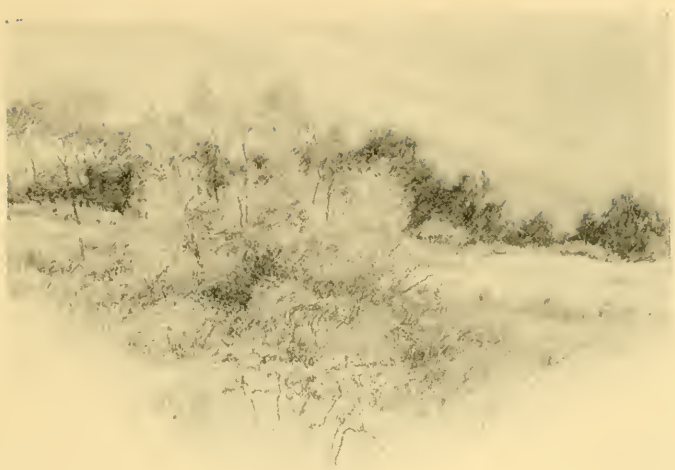
Happy Cal's unwelcome guests and his blighted affections—Catfish John's rheumatism and his pork that "them fellers" stole—Old Sipes's lost "kittle"—Doc Looney's unappreciative wives—J. Ledyard Symington's "humiliations," and all the other troubles of the old outcasts, will disappear into the oblivion of the years, with the rest of the affairs and happenings of this life.

If they have not been ambitious, their rapacity has not destroyed empires, or deluged the earth with blood. If they have not been learned, they have not used knowledge to devise means for the destruction of human life. If they have not been powerful, their greed has not oppressed and impoverished their fellow-beings.

Let us hope that the storms from the lake, and civilization on the shore, will deal gently with these poor derelicts, as they peacefully fade away into the elements from which they came.

(*From the Author's Etching*)

"RESUMING THEIR MIGRATIONS"



CHAPTER XI

THE BACK COUNTRY

BEHIND the ranges of the sand hills, lie stretches of broken waste country. It is diversified with patches of woods, tangled thickets, swamps, little ponds, stagnant pools covered with green microscopic vegetation, and small areas of productive soil. There are long, low elevations, covered sparsely with gnarled

pines, spruces, poplars, and sumacs. Tall elms, many willows, and an occasional silvery barked sycamore, lend variety to the scene.

Here and there, just back of the big hills, are deep secluded tarns, which have no visible outlets or inlets. One looks cautiously down from the surrounding edges. In the obscurity of the deep shadows there is tangled dead vegetation, a few decayed tree-trunks, and an uncanny stillness. Unseen stagnant water is there, and the mysterious depths seem to be without life. They are fit abodes for gnomes, and evil spirits may haunt their silences. There is an instinctive creepy feeling, and an undefined dread in the atmosphere around them.

Swamps of tamarack, which are impenetrable, contribute their masses of deep green to the charm of the landscape. The ravagers of the wet places hide in them, and the timid, hunted wild life finds refuge in their still labyrinths. In the winter countless tracks and trails on the snow lead into them and are lost.

Among the most interesting of the marsh dwellers is the muskrat. This active little animal

is an ever-present element in the life of the sloughs, and he is the most industrious live thing in the back country. His numerous families thrive and increase, in spite of vigilant enemies that besiege them. The larger owls, the foxes, minks, and steel traps are their principal foes.

A MARSH DWELLER

The houses, irregular in shape and size, dot the surfaces of the ponds and swamps. They are built of lumps of sod and mud, mixed with bulrushes

and heavy grass. They usually contain two rooms, one above the other, and little tunnels lead out from them, under ground, providing channels of escape in case of danger, and safe routes of approach to the houses from the burrows in the higher ground along the banks.

The upper cavity of the little adobe structure is usually lined with moss and fine grass. Lily roots, freshwater clams, and other food are carried up into it from under the ice in the winter. In these cosy retreats the little colonies live during the cold months, oblivious to the cares and dangers of the outside world.

There is a network of thoroughfares and burrows in the soft earth among the roots of the willows on the neighboring banks. The devious secret passages and runways are in constant use during the summer.

The muskrats are great travelers, and roam over the meadows, through the ravines, up and down the creeks, and around on the sand hills, in search of food and adventure. They run along the lake shore at night, and their tracks are found all over the beach. Their well-beaten paths radiate

in all directions from their homes. They are not entirely lovable, but the back country would be desolate indeed without them.

The herons stand solemnly, like sentinels, among

A SENTINEL IN THE MARSH

the thick grasses, and out in the open places, watching for unwary frogs, minnows, and other small life with which nature has bountifully peopled the sloughs. The crows and hawks drop quickly behind clumps of weeds on deadly errands in the day time, and at night the owls, foxes, and

minks haunt the margins of the wet places. The enemies of the Little Things are legion. Violent death is their destiny. With the exception of the turtles, they are all eaten by something larger and more powerful than themselves.

In the fall and early spring the wild ducks and geese drop into the ponds and marshes, and rest

(*From the Author's Etching*)

THEY "DROP INTO THE PONDS AND MARSHES"

for days at a time, before resuming their migrations. They come in from over the lake during the storms to find shelter for the night, and are reluctant to leave the abundant food in these nooks

behind the hills. A flat-bottomed boat among the bulrushes, and a few artificially arranged thick bunches of brush and long grass, which have been used as shooting blinds, usually explain why they have not stayed longer.

A few of the ducks remain during the summer, build their nests on secluded boggy spots, and rear their young; but the minks, snapping turtles, and other enemies besides man, generally see that few of them live to fly away in the fall.

Occasionally a small weather-beaten frame house, and a tumble-down old barn, project their gables into the landscape. Around them is usually a piece of cleared land that represents years of toil and combat with the reluctant soil, obstinate stumps, and tough roots.

Nature has begrudgingly yielded a scanty livelihood to the brave and simple ones who have spent their youth and middle age in wresting away the barriers which have stood between them and the comforts of life. The broken-spirited animals that stand still, with lowered heads, in the little fields and around the barn, are mute testimonies of the years of drudgery and hardship.

On approaching the house we encounter a few ducks that splash into the ditch along the muddy road, and disappear in great trepidation among the weeds and bulrushes beyond the fence. The loud barking of a mongrel dog is heard, a lot of chickens scatter, and several children with touseled heads and frightened faces appear. Behind them a lean-faced woman in a faded calico dress looks out with a reserved and kindly welcome. The dog is rebuked sharply, and finally quieted. The scared children hastily retreat into the house, and peek out through the curtained windows. We explain that we came to ask for a drink of water. The woman disappears for a moment, brings a cup, and some rain water in a broken pitcher, with which to prime the pump in the yard.

This wheezy piece of hardware, after much teasing, and encouragement from the broken pitcher, finally yields, and one object of the visit is accomplished. The children begin cautiously to reappear, their curiosity having got the better of their alarm.

A few commonplace remarks about the weather, a complimentary reference to a flower bed near the

fence, an inquiry as to the ages of the children, soon establish a friendly footing, and we are asked to sit down on the bench near the pump and rest awhile.

"Don't you sometimes feel lonely out here, with no neighbors?" I asked. "No, indeed," she replied. "We've got all the neighbors we want. Nobody lives very near here, but there isn't a day passes that I don't see somebody drivin' by out on the road. I ride to town every two or three weeks, an' that's enough for anybody."

A man of perhaps forty, but who looks to be fifty, rather tall and spare, with bent shoulders and shambling step, appears after a few minutes. His shaved upper lip and long chin whiskers strictly conform to the established customs of the back country.

It is a land of the chin whiskers, and they are met with everywhere in the by-paths of civilization. Their picturesque quality is the delight of him who uses the lead pencil and pen to portray the oddities of his race.

He has come from over near the edge of the timber, where he has been repairing a decayed rail

fence. His greeting is kindly, and we are made to feel quite at home. Some fresh buttermilk from an old-fashioned churn near the back door adds to the pleasant hospitality, and the loud cackling of a proud and energetic rooster, adorned with brilliant plumage, who takes credit for the warm egg which a dignified old hen has just left in the corner of the corn crib, lends an air of cheerfulness and animation to the scene. He has just learned of the achievement, and the glory is his.

Out in the yard is a covered box with a circular hole in its front. A small chain leads into it, which is attached to the outside by a staple. After a few minutes the furtive wild eyes of a captive coon peer out fearfully from the inner darkness of the box. He was extracted from the cosy interior of a hollow tree, over near the edge of the swamp, during his infancy, and was the sole survivor of a moonlight attack on his home tree, after the dogs had located the happy family. The tree was cut down, the little furry things mangled by savage teeth, and their house made desolate. The little fellow was carried into a hopeless captivity, where his days and nights are passed in terror. He is a prisoner and not a pet.

It is mankind that does these things—not the brutes—and yet we cry out in denunciation when humanity is thus outraged. We chain and cage the wild things, and shriek for freedom of thought and action. Verily this is a strange world!

I talked with one of the little girls about the coon. She told me his story and said they called him "Tip." My heart went out to him, and I longed to take him under my coat, carry him into the deep woods, and bid him God speed. He probably would have bitten me had I attempted it, but in this he would have been justified from his point of view, for he had never had a chance in his despoiled life to learn that there could be sympathy in a human touch. In this poor Tip is not alone in the world.

Time slumbers in the back country. The weekly paper is the only printed source of news from the outside, and, with the addition of a monthly farm magazine, with its woman's department, constitutes the literature of the home. These periodicals are read by the light of the big kerosene lamp on the table in the middle of the room, and the facts and opinions found in them become gospel.

The country village is perhaps a couple of miles farther inland. There is a water-mill on the little river, and bags of wheat and corn are taken to it to be ground. The miller—sleepy-eyed and white—comes out and helps to unload the incoming grain, or deposit the flour or meal in the back part of the wagon.

The general store and post-office is on the main road, near the mill. The proprietor is the oracle of the community, and a fountain of wit and wisdom. The store is the clearing-house for the news and gossip of the passing days.

A weather-beaten sign across the front of the building reads, "THE CENTER OF THE WORLD." The owner declares that "this must be so, fer the edges of it are just the same distance off from the store, no matter which way ye look."

There is much unconscious philosophy in the quaintly humorous sign, for, after all, how little we realize the immensity of the material and intellectual world that is beyond our own horizon. The homely wit touches incisively one of the foibles of human kind.

Elihu Baxter Brown, the storekeeper, is well

along in years. He is tall, somewhat stoop-shouldered, and his eyes look quizzically out of narrow slits. His heavy gray mustache dominates

THE "GENERAL STORE"

his face, the cumbersome ornament suggesting a pair of frayed lambrequins. He lives in a little old-fashioned house that sets back in a yard next his store. A quiet gray-haired woman, with a kindly face, sits sewing in the shade near the back door. They walked to the home of the minister fifteen miles away, to be married, over fifty years

ago. They trudged back in the afternoon and began their lives together in the humble frame house that now shows the touch of decay and the scars of winter storms.

THE STOREKEEPER

The small trees that they planted around it have grown tall enough almost to hide the quiet home among their shadows. Little patches of sunlight that have stolen through the leaves are scattered

over the roof on bright days, like happy hours in solemn lives.

In a sealed glass jar on a "what-not" in a corner of the front room is a hard queer-looking lump, encrusted with dry mold, a fragment of the wedding cake of half a century ago, which has been faithfully kept and cherished through the years. To the world outside it is meaningless; here it is sacred.

The little things to which sentiment can cling are the anchorages of our hearts. They keep us from drifting too far away, and they call to us when we have wandered. The small piece of wedding cake—gray like the heads of those who reverence it—has helped to prolong the echoes of the chimes of years ago. It was a rough gnarled hand which carefully put the glass jar back into its place after it was shown, but it was a tender and beautiful thought that kept it there.

The old man is now seventy-six. He says that sometimes he is only about thirty, and at other times he is over a hundred—it all depends on the weather and the condition of his rheumatism.

"When I git up in the mornin'," said he, "I first find out how my rheumatism is, then I take a look at the weather, an' figger out what kind of a day it's goin' to be. If it's goin' to rain I let 'er rain, an' if it ain't, all well an' good. Business is pretty slow when it rains, an' when its ten or fifteen below in the winter, they ain't no business at all. When it gits like that I hole up like a woodchuck, an' set in the back part o' the store in my high-chair, an' make poetry an' read. I don't like to do too much readin', fer readin' rots the mind, an' I'd rather be waitin' on people comin' in. Most gen'rally a lot o' the old cods that live 'round 'ere drop in an' we talk things over.

"This rheumatism o' mine is a queer thing. I'll tell ye sumpen confidential. You prob'ly won't believe it, an' I wouldn't want what I say to git out 'cause its so improb'le, an' it might hurt my credit, but I've bin cured o' my rheumatism twice by carryin' a petrified potato in my pocket. An old friend of mine, Catfish John's got it now, an' I don't want to take it away from 'im as long as it's helpin' 'im, but when 'e gits through with it, I'm goin' to have it back on the job, an' you bet

I'll be hoppin' 'round 'ere as lively as a cricket. The potato 'll prob'ly be 'ere next week. I've had it fer ten years, an' it beats everything I've ever tried."

I asked the old man to allow me to see some of the poetry he had "made," and thereby opened up a literary mine. The request touched a tender chord and I was ushered back to a worn desk of antique pattern in the rear of the store. He raised the lid and extracted the treasure. A book had been removed from its binding, and the covers converted into a portfolio. He gently removed about a hundred sheets of paper of various shapes and sizes, covered with closely written matter. Some of the spelling would have shocked the shade of Lindley Murray, and made it glad that he had passed away, and some of it would have made a champion of spelling reform quite happy. It was *vers libre* of the most malignant type. Rhymes were freely distributed at picturesque random, and while the ideas, rhythm, and meter were quite lame at times, much of the verse was better than some recently published imagist poetry, which contains none of these things. Humor and pathos

were intermingled. Sometimes there was much humor where pathos was intended, and often real pathos lurked among the lighter lines.

There are many singers who are never heard. Melodies in impenetrable forests and trills that float on desert air are for those who sing, and not for those who listen. A happy soul may pour forth impassioned song in solitude, for the joy of the singing, and a solitary bard may distil his fancy upon pages that are for him alone.

The verse of Elihu Baxter Brown is its own and only excuse for being. It has solaced the still hours, and if its creator has been its only reader, he has been most appreciative.

A touching lay depicts his elation upon the departure of his wife "in a autobeel" on a long visit to distant relatives, but the joy prevails only during the first six lines. The remaining thirty are devoted to sorrow and "lonely misery as I walketh the street," and end with "when will she be back I wonder?" He falls into a "reverree" and from under its gentle spell the virile lines, "The brite moon makes a strong impress on me," and "I've named my pet hen after thee," float into the world.

With "eyes full of weep" he reflects that "sometimes she's cold as all git out," and further on he wishes that his "loved one was a pie," so as to facilitate immediate and affectionate assimilation.

He bids the world to "go on with its music and kink it another note higher." In later lines he naïvely admits that "of all the poets I love myself the best." Alas, he has much company! This effusion ends with "Gosh, I can't finish this poetry till I pull myself together."

War, love, spring, and beautiful snow flow through the limping measures. There are odes to the sun, the rain, and to his old bob-tailed gray cat, "Tobunkus," who drowses peacefully on the counter near the scales.

The inspection of the poems led to the exhibition of his box of relics and curios, which he greatly valued. Among the carefully ticketed and labeled items, which we spread out on the counter, was a small chip from Libby Prison, a fragment of stone picked up near the National Capitol, a shark's tooth, some Indian arrow-heads, an iron ring from a slave auction pen of ante-bellum days, a chip from the pilot house of a steamboat

that was wrecked sixty years ago on the Atlantic coast, the dried stump of a cigar which had been given to him when he visited a Russian man-of-war in Boston harbor in 1859, and many other odds and ends that were of priceless value to him.

I picked up a small, round piece of wood, which he told me was the most remarkable and interesting relic of the whole lot. "That," said he, "is a piece of the first shaving brush I ever shaved with"—a fact fully as important as most things, seemingly significant at present, will be a century hence. This wonderful object completed the exhibition, and the collection was carefully put away.

The interior of the store was rather gloomy, badly ventilated, and was pervaded with numberless and commingled odors. I could distinguish kerosene, dead tobacco-smoke, stale vegetables, damp dry-goods, and smoked herrings, but the rest of the indescribable medley of smells baffled analysis.

The stock of merchandise was varied, but there was very little of any one kind, except plug tobacco. Over a case containing several large boxes of this necessity of life in the back country was a

strip of cardboard, on which was inscribed, "Don't use the nasty stuff." Under a wall-lamp was another placard, "This flue don't smoke, neither should you." Other examples of the proprietor's wit were scattered along the edges of the shelves, and on the walls, and helped to impart an individual character to the place. Among them were, "Don't be bashful. You can have anything you can pay for." "This store is not run by a trust." "No setting on the counter—this means *you!*" "Credit given only on Sundies, when the store is closed." "Don't talk about the war—it makes me sick."

A large portion of the stock was in cans. Some of them had evidently been on the shelves for many years. There were cove oysters, sardines, and tinned meats of various kinds, with badly fly-specked labels. The old man remarked that "some o' them air-tights has bin on hand since the early eighties."

The humble tin can has been one of the important factors in the progress of the human race. With the theodolite, the sextant, and the rifle, it has been carried to the waste places of the earth,

and because of it they have bloomed. Tin cans have lined the trails to unknown lands, and they have been left at both of the poles. The invader has flung them along his remorseless path when he has gone to murder quiet distant peoples whose religion differed from his own, and they have thus been made "instruments of the Lord's mercy." They lie on ghastly battlefields, mingled with splintered bones, where a civilization, of which we have boasted, has left them.

They are scattered over the bottom of the sea, float languidly in the currents of uncharted rivers, and rust on the sands of the deserts. They are hiding-places for tropical reptiles in tangled morasses, and prowling beasts sniff at them curiously in deserted camps along the outer rims of the world.

They symbolize the ingenuity of the white man, and in them has reposed the remains of every kind of fish, reptile, bird and beast that he has used for food. The aged bull, the scrawny family cow, the venerable rooster, the faithful superannuated hen, the senile billy goat, and other obsolete domestic animals, have found a temporary tomb

within mysterious walls of tin, and have helped to feed others than those who canned them. They enclose fruit and vegetables that could not be sold fresh, and in them they go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

It was indeed strange destiny that took the sardine, flashing his bright sides in the blue Mediterranean, and left him immured on a musty shelf in a store in the back country. If he, with the contents of the cans around him, could return to life, there would be a motley company.

Perhaps, in quiet midnight hours, wraiths come out of the tins and play in the moonbeams that filter through the dusty windows. They may all have been there so long that social caste has been established. The fish, lobsters, cove oysters and clams, being sea people, probably hold aloof. This they may well do, as they are on the upper shelves.

The elderly domestic animals may have a dignified stratum of their own, in which the affairs of the old families can be discussed, while those who were feathered in life possibly form another pale

group that devotes itself entirely to questions of personal adornment.

Behind the red labels on the lower shelves are the devilled ham and the pig's feet. The goblins from these may hold high carnival in the silvery light—the frolics of the indigestibles—and their antics may last until the gray of the morning comes.

Nameless elfs may appear in the little throng. They are from the soups, and have so many component parts that they know not what they are. Naturally they may precede the others, but if they are in the ghostly circle, they are not of it.

Probably the specters from the canned hash are at the lower end of the scale.

I suggested to the old man that all these things might be happening while he slumbered, but he declared that I was mistaken. "There's never bin any doin's like that goin' on 'round the store," said he.

Figuratively, it might be said that many of us obtain most of our intellectual food from cans. The diet may be varied occasionally by fresh nutrients, but too often we rely upon products bearing established trade-marks for our mental suste-

nance. The rows of labels, honored by time and dimmed by dust, stand like tiers of skulls, with their eyeless caverns gravely still—mute symbols of the eternal hours—as if staring in dull mockery out of a vanished past. Living currents flow around us unheeded. We absorb predigested thought to repletion, and neglect vibrant mental forces, that through disuse become depleted, instead of enriching them with the study of the green and growing things that have not been put in cans.

"About ev'ry third year," said the old man, "business gits worse'n ever, an' that's when a hoss trader named Than Gandy comes 'round. He lives some'rs in the eastern part o' the state, an' after 'e's bin through 'ere 'e waits long enough fer most of 'em to fergit 'im before 'e comes agin. He starts out from where 'e lives with a sulky, an' a crow bait hoss, an' about five dollars. He spends a couple o' months on 'is travels among the little places away from the railroads, an' when 'e gits through with 'is trip, 'e has a string o' seven er eight hosses, an' four er five little wagons an' buggies, an' a lot o' harnesses an' whips an' calves an' sheep, an' a big wad o' money. He's got all

them things to boot in trades 'e keeps makin'. He beats ev'rybody 'e runs up ag'inst, an' when 'e quits 'round 'ere nobody's got any money left to buy things with. They don't know what's happened to 'em till 'e's away off. When 'e stops at the store, he gen'rally trades me sumpen fer what 'e wants.

"Once Jedge Blossom traded hosses with 'im when 'e was piped, an' gave 'im ten dollars to boot. He got a bum animal shifted on 'im, an' when 'e sobered up, 'e sent Gandy a bill fer fifteen dollars fer legal advice, an' the advice was not to come into this part o' the country any more."

The old man told me that he was born in a small town in Massachusetts.

"I was named after the preacher of our church. He was a great man an' 'is eloquence was wonderful. His name was the Reverend Elihu Baxter, an' 'e used to go up into the pulpit, an' lean 'is stummick 'way out over it, an' say, '*Now you listen to me'!*—an' that's the way 'e drawed 'em to 'im. When 'e'd first begin, the church 'ud be so still that you could hear the flies buzz, an' 'is voice would sound all hollow, like 'e was talkin' into a

big dish-pan. We don't have no more preachers like 'im now days, an' people don't go to church no more like they did then. We don't have no more old-fashioned Sundays. There's too many newspapers, an' what they have to say takes the place o' what we used to hear in the pulpit. What the preachers say now days ain't interestin' any more. People rest an' play on Sunday now, instid o' bein' solemn an' sad an' settin' 'round an' listenin' over an' over to somebody tellin' about them three fellers that was in the fiery furnace."

He felt deeply his responsibility as a representative of the national government. The post-office department, with its rows of glass-fronted mail boxes, numbered from 1 to 40, was located at the right of the store entrance. The mail bag was brought daily from the railroad station, five miles away, by a fat-faced young man in blue overalls and a hickory shirt. His elbows flopped madly up and down as his horse galloped along the highway with the precious burden across the pommel. He made another trip at night with the out-going mail, and when the hoof-beats were heard on the road, there would be many glances at the clocks

in the houses along his route, and the fact approvingly noted, that "Bill's on time to-night, all right."

There are many people in the world who win lasting laurels by being "on time." Some do it quietly, and others by flopping their arms violently, to the accompaniment of resonant hoof-beats, as "Bill" does, but being "on time" is essential to success in life. "Bill" may have no other argument to present for his eventual redemption than the fact that he was always "on time," but it cannot fail to be powerful and convincing.

"I would like this postmaster business," said the old man, "if it wasn't fer all the books I have to write in an' the blanks I have to fill out. It keeps people comin' in, but sometimes I have to set up pretty near all night writin' out things fer the gov-'ament. I don't keep no books fer the store, fer I never sell nothin' 'cept fer cash, or fer sumpen that's brought in, an' I keep my expense account in my hat. If the sheriff ever comes 'round 'ere to close me up, 'e won't find no books to go by. I spend all the money that gits in the drawer, an' if what's in the store should burn up, I'd be ahead

'cause I've got insurance, an' I'd git it all at once; so I guess I'm all right. I ain't got much to show fer my life, 'cept a grin, but that's sumpen. Some day I'll have all the poetry I've made printed into a volume that'll be put on sale, an' I'll have a reg'lar income an' I won't have to work no more.

"I'm keepin' a first class place here. There's a lot o' this new-fangled stuff that I've stopped carryin'. People always buy it out when they come in, an' I have to keep gittin' more all the time. If I don't have them things they ask fer, they'll prob'ly buy sumpen that's already on hand. I can't please ev'rybody all the time, or I'd be worked to death. I don't keep no likker, but anybody can git most anything else here that'll make 'em smell like a man, an' I don't sell no cigarettes. A feller come in 'ere with one once, an' when 'e went out 'e left 'is punk on the edge of a pile o' paper. After a while some o' the bunch out in front noticed some fire, an' it pretty near burnt up the store, an' besides they smell like a burnt offering, an' I don't like 'em."

I asked him if he ever went over to the lake.

"Not fer about fifteen years. We all drove over there fer a bath, an' I took a bad cold an' I haven't bin there since. This talk o' washin' all the time is nonsence. Jedge Blossom's got a big tin bath tub up to his place, that's painted green, an' 'e gits in it an' sloshes 'round ev'ry Saturday night when 'e's home, but when Monday mornin' comes 'e don't look no better'n anybody else."

During one afternoon that I spent with him in the rear of the store, he showed me some of the literature which he had taken down from the stock on one of the upper shelves, and had been reading during the winter. The pile consisted of old-fashioned dime novels of years ago, with their multicolored illustrated paper covers. Among the titles, and on the blood-curdling, well-thumbed pages, I found names that were once familiar and much beloved. "Lantern-Jawed Bob," "Snake Eye," "Deadwood Dick," "Iron Hand," "Navajo Bill," "Shadow Bill," "The Forest Avenger," "Eagle-Eyed Zeke," "The War Tiger of the Modocs," "The Mountain Demon," and many other forgotten heroes of boyhood days, "advanced coolly and stealthily" out of the mists of the dim past, and

once more they scalped, robbed, trailed, circumvented bloodthirsty pursuers, had hair-breadth escapes, mocked death, rescued peerless maidens from savage redskins in the wilderness, and finally married them, as of yore.

The romance in the pile was irretrievably bad, but it recalled happy memories. It was not surprising that the old man was impressed with the idea that "too much readin' rots the mind," when spring came, and he had finished the stack.

Around the big stove, on chilly days, the owners of the chin whiskers congregate, with cob pipes and juicy plug. They contribute liberally to the square boxes filled with sawdust that serve as cuspidors. In this solemn circle the great political problems of the nation are considered and solved.

The gossip of the township is exchanged, and the personal frailties of absent ones discussed. The local Munchausen tells wondrous tales of his cow, that stands out in the river and is milked by hungry fish that wait among the lilies, and of hailstorms he has seen that have demolished brickyards.

A projected barn, the sale of a horse or cow, the repairs on a wagon, the prospects of frost or

rain, the crops, the price of hogs, the tariff, the trusts, the rascality of the railroads, and many other subjects, are mingled with the gossip of the neighborhood. These matters are all deeply pondered over. They talk about their rheumatism,

THE PESSIMISTS

the "cricks" in their backs, their coughs, their aches and pains, and the foolish vagaries of the "women folks." They buy patent medicines, and they bathe only when they get caught in the rain.

A slatternly looking woman comes in, buys some

calico, thread, two yards of ribbon, and some hooks and eyes. When she departs some one remarks, "Wonder wot she's goin' to make now!" From that the conversation drifts to "the feller that left 'er about two years ago." The proprietors of the chin whiskers all knew "when 'e fust come 'round, 'e wasn't any good," and the sage prophecies of by-gone days are now fully verified. The demerits of a certain horse, which he had once sold to one of the prophets, are again recounted, and the general opinion is that after the delinquent "got through with the lawsuit 'e was mixed up in, 'e went out west som'ers with the money 'is lawyer didn't git. Anyhow, 'e was no good." Nobody is "any good."

When the time comes to "git home to supper," the dilapidated vehicles begin to crawl out into the fading light and disappear. They carry the pessimists and the few necessaries which they have bought at the store—some molasses, sugar, tea and coffee, possibly a new shovel, some nails, and always a plentiful supply of plug tobacco, a great deal of which is filtered into the soil of the back country. Some eggs, butter, vegetables, and other

produce of the little farm has been left in payment.

After the tired horses are unhitched and fed, the exciting gossip is retold at the supper table. A

THEY "CRAWL OUT INTO THE FADING LIGHT"

few chores are done, an hour or so is spent around the big lamp, and another eventful day has closed. A week may pass before another trip is made to the sleepy village.

Those who are gone are under the tall grasses and wild flowers on the hill near the woods, beyond the little weather-beaten country church. The iron bell has tolled for them as they were laid away, and now that it is all over, it is the same with them as if they had been monarchs or millionaires.

A touching, if crude, epitaph can be deciphered on one of the gray mossy stones through the crumbling fence. After the name and the final date are the lines,

> "Shed not for me the bitter tears
> Nor fill the heart with vain regrets.
> 'Tis but the casket that lies here,
> The gems that filled them sparkles yet."

and lower, under a pair of clasped hands, "We will meet again," and it may be that a mighty truth is on the stone.

CHAPTER XII

JUDGE CASSIUS BLOSSOM

THE road leading from the lake, through the sand hills, and the low stretches of the back country, over to the sleepy village, is broken—and badly broken—by numerous sections of corduroy reinforcements, which have been laid in the marshy places, across small creeks and quagmires. The portion of the road near the lake is seldom traveled. Occasionally, during the hot weather, a wagon-load of people will come over from the sleepy village, and from the little farms along the road, and go into the lake to get cool. They will then spend the rest of the day sweltering on the hot sand to get warm, and return at night.

Beyond the marsh, perhaps half way to the village, is the residence and office of Judge Cassius Blossom, the local Dogberry, the repository of the conflicting interests, and final arbiter in most of the petty dissensions of the sparsely settled country in which he lives.

OLD SETTLERS IN THE BACK COUNTRY

The "Jedge" was a faithful member of the solemn conclaves of the wise ones with the chin whiskers at the general store in the sleepy village, where he often reversed the decisions of the supreme court. His chair in the charmed circle around the big old-fashioned stove, and among the sawdust cuspidors, in winter, and out on the platform under the awning in summer, was looked upon as the resting-place of about as much legal wisdom, and about as much bad whisky, as one man could comfortably carry around. His dissertations were always anxiously listened to and absorbed by his auditors, each according to his capacity. His opinions and observations were variously interpreted to the home firesides around through the country at night, according to the intellectual limitations of the narrator.

"The Jedge says that they's some cases that's agin the common law, an' they's some cases that's agin the stattoot law, but about this 'ere case he was talkin' about, 'e said 'e'd 'ave to look up sumpen. He told about a case where some feller 'ad sued another feller fer some money that was owin' to 'im, but 'e'd lost the notes, but 'e was goin' to

git a judgment agin this feller all the same, an' make a levy on 'im. You bet I'm goin' to be thar when this case comes up in court an' see wot's doin'. The Jedge is sharper'n a tack, an' you bet them fellers over to the county seat ain't goin' to put nothin' over on' im, if 'e's sober. He'll make points on all of 'em, but if 'e goes over thar an' sets 'round Fogarty's place boozin', 'e'll lose out."

In talking with Sipes, one afternoon, about some of the roads in the back country, he suggested that we take a walk over to the Judge's house and see him. "The Jedge has got a map that's got all them things on it. The ol' feller deals in law, an' land, an' fire insurance, an' everythin' else."

After Sipes had carefully shut the door of his shanty, and secured it with an old iron padlock, we started on our journey. He said that he generally locked the place up when he went away, as "there was sometimes some fellers snoopin' 'round that might swipe sumpen, an' the Jedge told me oncet that if anybody ever busted open the lock, it would show bulgarious intent, an' they'd git sent up fer it if they ever got caught, but if they went in

when the place wasn't locked, it was trespass on the case, or sumpen like that."

We trudged along through the deep sand for half a mile or so, and then turned through an opening in the dunes where the road came in. Our walk led through the broken wet country for about a mile before we came to more solid ground. On the way across the marshy strip the old man pointed out familiar spots where he had "lambasted pretty near a whole flock o' ducks at one shot." In another place he had once spent nearly an hour in "sneakin' up on a bunch o' wooden decoys that some feller had out, an' when I shot into 'em you'd a thought a ton o' lead 'ad struck a lumber pile. The feller yelled when I fired. He was back in some weeds, an' I guess 'e was afraid there was goin' to be sumpen doin' on 'im with the other bar'l if 'e didn't yell."

A tamarack swamp, about half a mile away, was a favorite haunt for rabbits in the winter. He often went over there on the ice after there had been a light fall of snow.

"Them little beasts are pretty foxy, but I just go over there an' set still, an' when one of 'em comes

hoppin' 'round out in the open, I shoot the fillin' out of 'im. I've got as many as twenty there in one day.

"When we git over to the Jedge's house, don't you go ag'inst none o' that whisky that 'e's got in a big black bottle in the under part of 'is desk. He calls the bottle 'Black Betty,' an' it's ter'ble stuff. It kicks pretty near as hard as my ol' scatter gun, an' 'e has to keep a glass stopper in the bottle. A common cork would be et up. A man that laps up whisky like that has to have a sheet-iron stummick, an' I guess the Jedge's got one all right, fer 'e's bin hittin' it fer years.

"He fills the bottle up out of a big demijohn, that 'e gits loaded up from a partic'lar bar'l at Fogarty's place over to the county seat when 'e goes to court, an' lots o' times when 'e don't go to court. The bar'l replenishes the demijohn, the demijohn replenishes Black Betty, an' Black Betty replenishes the Jedge, an' after that the Jedge has to replenish Fogarty—so it all works 'round natural—an' the Jedge keeps a skinful all the time.

"A white man could drink the grog we used to have on the ship an' still see, but the Jedge's dope

would make a hole in a pine board, an' you pass it by."

This I solemnly promised to do.

"I notice that them fellers that take up stiddy boozin' have to 'tend to it all the time. When ol' Jedge Blossom finds out that them law cases that 'e's always talkin' about interferes with 'is boozin', 'e'll quit monkeyin' with 'em. It must a bin a sweet country that 'e bloomed in. Pretty near every time I go to see 'im, 'e ain't home. They say 'e's off 'tendin' to some important cases before the master in chancery. Them cases is prob'ly mostly before Black Betty, fer I notice 'e always comes home from 'em stewed, an' sometimes 'is horse comes home alone an' 'e comes later. He takes drinks lots o' times when 'e don't need 'em. He just drops 'em in to hear 'em spatter.

"They'll find 'im in a catamose condition some day when 'e's over to the county seat, that 'e won't come out of, an' when it's all over they can dispose of 'is remains by just pourin' 'im back into Fogarty's bar'l. All that'll be left of 'im'll be 'is thirst, an' they'd better put wot'll be left of 'is fire insurance business in with 'im, fer 'e'll need some."

The old man's entertaining review of the frailties of the "Jedge," and of alcoholic humanity in general, continued until we arrived at our destination.

The small frame house, which was once white, but now a dingy gray, was adorned with faded green blinds. It stood about fifty feet back from the road. Some mournful evergreens stood in painful regularity in the front yard. The fence was somewhat dilapidated, and on it was a weather-beaten sign:

CASSIUS BLOSSOM, J.P.,
Attorney and Counsellor at Law,
Notary Public,
Fire Insurance, Real Estate.

A gravel walk, fringed with white shells, led from the rickety gate to the rather ecclesiastical-looking front door. Sipes remarked in passing that "them white shells was to help the Jedge steer 'is course on dark nights, when 'e was three sheets in the wind, an' beatin' up aginst it."

There was a brown bell-handle near the door, and when it was pulled we could hear a prolonged, hoarse tinkling somewhere off in the rear of the

house. We soon heard footsteps, and a forbidding-looking female opened the door. She was quite tall and angular. A few faded freckles around the nose—a mass of frowsy red hair, liberally streaked with gray—a general untidiness—and a glint in her yellowish-brown eyes, as she peered out at us over her brass-rimmed spectacles, produced impressions that were anything but assuring.

On being admitted to the house, we were ushered into the "library," which also evidently served as a dining-room and office. A round table stood in the middle of the room, covered with a soiled red and white fringed table cloth. A hair-cloth sofa, with some broken springs and bits of excelsior protruding from underneath, occupied one side of the apartment, and there were several chairs of the same repellant material. A narrow roll-top combination desk and bookcase, freely splotched with ink-stains, stood near the window. Behind the dusty glass doors of the bookcase were a few well-worn books, bound in sheepskin. The first volume of Blackstone's Commentaries, a copy of Parsons on Contracts, two or three volumes of court reports, and the Revised Statutes of the state, completed the assemblage of legal lore.

The pictures on the walls consisted of some stiff-looking crayon portraits in gloomy frames, evidently copied from old photographs—all of which were very bad—another somber frame containing a fly-specked steel engraving of the justices of the U. S. Supreme Court, and still another, out of which the stern and noble face of Daniel Webster looked into the room. His immeasurable services to his country did not prevent him from leaving a malign influence behind him. His unfortunate example convinces many budding statesmen and promising lawyers that the human intellect is not soluble in alcohol, and they are lulled into the belief that the brilliancy of his mind was not dimmed by his indulgences. They emulate his weakness, as well as his strength, and console themselves in their cups with the greatness of Webster.

The "Jedge" sat at the desk, without his coat, writing, his back toward us. His shirt-sleeves, and his wide stand-up collar, were not clean. Evidently he was very busy and must not be disturbed just yet. With a solemn wink of his solitary eye, and an expressive gesture, Sipes attracted my attention to a faint wreath of softly ascending smoke

issuing from a cob pipe, which was lying on a window-sill on the opposite side of the room, which suggested that the important business at the desk may have commenced when the bell rang.

Evidently the "Jedge" appreciated the tactical advantage which preoccupation always establishes when business callers come. The visitor, in being compelled to await the disposal of more weighty matters, is duly humbled and impressed with the fact that, at least so far as time is concerned, he is a suppliant and not a dictator.

Dissimulation is an universal practice of man and woman kind. A pessimistic student of the complexities of the human comedy might, with much justice, conclude that at least half of the people on the globe—and especially of those who are super-civilized—pretend, to a greater or less degree, to be something that they are not, and the other half pretend not to be something that they are.

Further thought upon this subject was interrupted by the "Jedge." The cane-seated swivel chair turned with a loud squeak, and we were before the disciple of Blackstone & Bacchus—that

famous firm whose dissolution the shade of Webster will never permit.

He was a spare, red-faced man, of perhaps sixty-five, with white hair and tobacco-stained whiskers. His prominent nose appeared to be a little swollen and wore a deep blush. With a learned frown he looked out of his deep-set and bloodshot eyes, over the tops of his spectacles. His voice was deep and hoarse.

"Good morning, gentlemen. What can I do for you?"

It was afternoon, but, as the uncharitable Sipes suggested later, "the Jedge prob'ly hadn't got home last night yet, or mebbe 'e'd just got up."

"You will have to excuse me for keeping you waiting, but I've just been preparing the final papers in a very important case that I've got to file in court by Saturday. I've had to work on them steadily for the past few days, as there are some very complicated questions of law involved, and I've had to look up a lot of decisions. I am now entirely at your service."

After being formally introduced by my friend Sipes, I explained the object of the visit. The

"Jedge" was very cordial. He arose from his chair, walked impressively, and with much dignity, across the room, resumed his cob pipe, which was still alive, and raised the lid of an old leather-covered trunk, bound with brass nails. After a long search he produced the desired map and spread it out on the table.

"Before we take up this matter of the roads, I think, gentlemen, that we had better have a little refreshment."

We both politely declined his invitation and expressed a preference for some cold water. He seemed disappointed, and, with a surprised and curious glance at Sipes, returned to the desk, opened one of the lower doors, and gently lifted "Black Betty" out of the gloom.

"I haven't been feeling very well for several days, and I've had some pains in my back. If you'll excuse me for drinking alone, I'll just take a little bracer." Sipes' solitary eye again closed expressively, as the "Jedge" removed the stopper, grasped the big bottle firmly around the neck, and tilted it among his whiskers with a motion that no tyro could ever hope to imitate.

The answering gurgle indicated that the "bracer" was "going home," and that, to say the least, it was not homeopathic. After the restoration of "Black Betty" to her hiding-place, the "Jedge" resumed the conversation, without referring to the cold water which we had suggested. Possibly the mention of it had affected him unpleasantly.

He explained the map in detail, and told of several changes that would have to be made in a new one. This led to long accounts, punctuated with more winks by Sipes, of petty litigation, in which he had taken a prominent part, as a result of which a lot of land had been condemned and some new roads established. Had it not been for him, the highways would have been "entirely inadequate, and in very poor condition."

In summing up his public services he said that he had lived in that part of the state for about thirty years. His advice was now being generally followed, and the country was beginning to pick up. He had several small farms for sale which he would like to show me, if I thought of locating around there; in fact, there was nothing anywhere in that part of the country that was not for sale.

I told him that my interest in the subject was entirely of an artistic character.

"Well, if that's the case, I can show you a lot of fine scenes, and if you'll come over some day and get into a buggy with me, I'll drive you over to the county seat when I go to court."

He seemed much flattered when I asked him to allow me to make a sketch of him. After it was finished, he examined it critically, to the intense amusement of Sipes. He thought the nose was a little too big, and the hair was "too much mussed up." He also thought that the drawing made him look a little older than he was, and that the eye was not quite natural, "but of course I can't see the side of my face, and it may be all right.

"As you are interested in art, you'll enjoy looking at my pictures."

He then showed me the array on the walls, of which he was very proud. The crayon portrait of his first wife, with the cheeks tinted pink and the ear-rings gilded, he thought "was a fine piece of work." A man had come along, about ten years ago, and had made three "genuine crayon portraits" for ten dollars. The "Jedge" supposed that

"now days they would be worth a great deal more than that." The other two "genuine crayon portraits" represented his father and mother, an antiquated couple in the Sunday dress of pioneer days, who looked severely out of their heavy frames. The man had taken the old daguerreotypes away to be copied, and when the completed goods were delivered, he claimed that "the frames alone were worth as much as the pictures." In this he was quite right.

The "Jedge" wanted to show me an album containing pictures of the rest of his relatives, but fortunately he was unable to find it. In searching for it, however, he ran across a box containing a collection of Indian arrow heads, flint implements, and spears, which were of absorbing interest. He had found some of them himself, and numerous friends, knowing of his hobby, had furnished him with many of these valuable relics of the red man, whose white brothers came with guns and strong waters and appropriated his heritage.

He soon began to show signs of more pains in his back. With an apologetic reference to them, and with more sly winks from Sipes, "Black Betty"

was again produced, and her fiery fluid again solaced the arid esophagus of the "Jedge."

The contents of the bottle were evidently getting dangerously low. He excused himself for a minute, and took it into the next room, where he refilled it from the big demijohn that stood in the corner. Sipes indulged in many amusing grimaces as the sounds from the other room indicated that "Black Betty's" condition had again become normal.

After we had talked a little while longer, Sipes related to the "Jedge" the story of the tangled set lines, over which he and "Happy Cal" had got into trouble years ago, and wanted to know "what the law was."

After listening carefully to all of the facts, the "Jedge" cleared his throat slightly and delivered his opinion.

This preliminary slight clearing of the throat implies deliberation, and often adds impressiveness to a forthcoming utterance. Sipes remarked later, that "nobody never lived that was as wise as the Jedge looked when 'e hemmed a little an' got on 'is legal frown."

"It seems from the facts before us, that the mass of property under consideration was discovered on the shore, about half-way between the homes of the two claimants, neither of whom, as a matter of fact, possessed original title to it. The position of the mass when found brings up several difficult questions of law, involving facts which are *malum in se*. A portion of it was on the surface of the water, a portion of it was submerged, and still another portion was on dry land. According to maritime law, that portion on the surface was flotsam, and that portion which was submerged was jetsam. The laws affecting flotsam and jetsam would prevail as to these two portions, but as to the portion which rested on dry land, I am inclined to think that the *lex loci* would apply."

Whereupon, the bewildered Sipes asked, "Who done this?"

Disregarding the interruption, the "Jedge" again slightly cleared his throat and continued:

"*A priori,* I am of opinion that *prima facie* evidence of ownership rests with possession, and that the *onus probandi* must necessarily be *ex adverso.*" The "Jedge" then stated that the opinion

would cost half a dollar. Sipes was speechless, but paid the fee.

The "Jedge" had charged "Happy Cal" a dollar one night, years ago, for an opinion in the same case. He had advised Cal "not to disturb the *status quo*." The dazed client paid the money and disappeared into the darkness. He probably stopped at Sipes's place, where the untangled lines were stretched out to dry, and cut them up, on his way home, thus disposing of the *"status quo"* entirely.

It was to the credit of the "Jedge" that he never took any more than his clients had, and they could always come back when they had more.

We finally thanked the "Jedge" for his courtesy, and bade him good-bye.

On the way back I reimbursed Sipes in the matter of the half-dollar which he had paid for the opinion, as it had really been worth more to me than it was to him. After we had left the house, the old man's comments on the visit were earnest and caustic.

"Wot d'ye think o' the gall o' that old cuss chargin' me half a dollar fer all that noise 'e made

about them lines? I don't know that feller Losey 'e spoke of. He was never 'round 'ere at all, an' 'e never 'ad nothin' to do with them lines, an' that melon in the sea, that 'e told about, was all bunk. There was nothin' like that near that bunch o' stuff. I don't know what ever become o' Cal. He may be now in spotless robes, fer all I know, but I know 'e cut up them lines just the same. There was about two miles of 'em, when they was fixed up an' stretched out, an' they was worth some money, an' as long as the feller that 'ad 'em out in the lake didn't come along to claim 'em, they was mine. Cal never 'ad no bus'ness with 'em, an' I don't need to mosey over an' pay that old tank fifty cents to find it out, neither. Cash us Blossom is a good name fer him, all right. He's everythin' I said 'e was on the way over, an' more, too. He's got some fresh money now, an' I'll bet the demijohn'll be trundled over to the county seat the first thing in the mornin'. He can buy a lot o' the kind o' whisky 'e drinks fer half a dollar.

"He lays 'is demijohn on the side, underneath, when 'e starts out, but when 'e drives home it's always standin' up in the back o' the buggy, so

nothin' 'll spill, an' that's more'n the Jedge could do. When I see 'im drivin' on the road, I can always tell, by where the demijohn is, whether 'e's got a cargo or travelin' light. That heap big Injun dignity that 'e's always puttin' on when 'e makes them spiels o' his, gives me tired feelin's. You can't mix up dignity with whisky without spoilin' both of 'em. If 'e ever comes over to my place, you can turn me into snakes if I don't charge 'im a half a dollar fer the first question 'e asks. I'll bet 'e won't come though, fer I'm too near the water. I wish I could sic old Doc Looney on 'im some time. He wouldn't stay afloat long after the Doc got to 'im."

I asked Sipes if the forbidding-looking female who came to the door was the Judge's wife.

"Not on yer life," he replied. "If 'e had a wife, she'd kill 'im. That ol' cactus is 'is housekeeper. She's a distant relative o' some kind, an' she's just waitin' fer Black Betty to finish 'im up so's she'll git the house."

We arrived at Sipes's place about dusk. I had left my boat on the beach, and, as the old man helped me push it into the water, he indulged in

final anathemas against the "Jedge." He shook his fist in his direction and said that "when we go over there ag'in we'd better leave our money in the shanty."

I happened to stop at the store in the sleepy village one hot day during the following summer. The "Jedge" was just getting into his buggy, but stopped and greeted me cordially. I intended leaving for home that evening, and he kindly offered to take me to the railroad station, about five miles away. I gladly accepted his offer, although he did not appear to be in a very good condition to drive a horse.

On the way across the country he recited his public services, discussed the details of his "important cases," and unfolded his dreams of the future of the county.

We arrived at the station just in time to enable me to jump quickly out of the buggy and catch the train that was pulling out. I paused on the rear platform to call out a good-bye to the "Jedge," but he had tried to make too short a turn on the narrow road, and the buggy was lying on its side, much twisted up. The horse had stopped and was

looking inquiringly back from between the broken thills. The "Jedge," who was partially under the wreck, but evidently unhurt, waved a cheerful farewell at me as the train passed the water tank, and in the distance I could see that he was getting safely out of the scrape.

The station agent and a few villagers, who had come to the depot to see that the train arrived and departed properly, were going to his assistance.

From about two miles away I saw the black buggy top slowly resume its normal position and begin to move on the road. The "Jedge" was probably by this time much in need of "refreshment," and, as he was now on the way to the county seat, relief was not very far off. Undoubtedly his friend Fogarty would fully and deeply sympathize with him in his troubles as long as his cash lasted.

He was one of the pathetic failures whom we meet daily in the walks of life. Naturally gifted, and fairly well educated, he had started bravely out on his road of destiny, with noble ambitions and alluring hopes. In the early part of the jour-

ney he had lifted a fatal chalice to his lips, and the way became dark. He drifted from the highway that might have led to fame and fortune to the still by-path in which we found him. Because he was not strong, he fell—as countless others have fallen before him.

The shadow of "Black Betty" has fallen over a chair in the sleepy village that is now empty, and it may be that the poor old "Jedge" is arguing his own plea for mercy before a greater Court. Let us hope that his final appeal may bring forgiveness and peace.

The stone, simple and suggestive, which was erected to his memory, was designed and paid for by his friends. Even Sipes relented and requested Catfish John to put fifty cents in "cash-money" into the contribution box at the store for him.

"AMONG BIG WET STRETCHES OF
HIGH GRASS AND BULRUSHES"

CHAPTER XIII

THE WINDING RIVER

TO enjoy a river we must adjust ourselves to its moods, for a river has many moods. It moves swiftly and light-heartedly over the shallows, as we do, and it has its solemn, quiet moments in the shadows of the steep banks, where the current is deep and still. It begins, like our lives, somewhere far away, and twists and turns, flows in long swerves, meets many rocks, ripples over pebbly places, smiles among many riffles, frowns under stormy skies, meditates in quiet nooks, and then goes on.

As it becomes older it broadens and becomes stronger. It begins to make a larger path of its own in the world, which it follows with varying fortunes, until its waters have gone beyond it.

The Winding River begins miles away and steals down through the back country. It curves and runs through devious channels and makes wide detours, before it finally flows out through the sand hills into the great lake.

Along its tranquil course there are many things to be studied and learned, and many new thoughts and sensations to grow out of them. We must go down the river, and not against its current, to know its strange spirit, and to love it. There is always a feeling of closer companionship when we are traveling in the same direction.

It is best to go alone, in a small boat, carrying a few feet of rope attached to a heavy stone, so that the boat may be anchored in any desirable spot. You should sit facing the bow, and guide the boat with a paddle, or a pair of oars in front of you, and let the current carry you along.

The journey commences several miles up in the woods, where the banks are only a few feet apart. The boat is piloted cautiously through the deep forest, among the ancient logs that clog the current. The patriarchs have fallen in bygone years, and are slowly moldering away into the limpid

waters that once reflected them in their stately Indian summer robes of red and gold.

Masses of water-soaked brush must be encountered, and sunken snags avoided. Fringes of small turtles, on decayed and broken branches, protruding from the water, and on the recumbent trunks, splash noisily into the depths below—a wood duck glides away downstream—a muskrat, that has been investigating a deep pool near the bank, beats a hasty retreat, and a few scolding chipmunks flip their tails saucily, and whisk out of sight. A gray squirrel barks defiantly from the branch of an over-hanging tree, and an excited kingfisher circles around, loudly protesting against the invasion of his hunting grounds.

All of the wild things resent intrusion into their solitudes, and disappear, when there is any movement. If we would know them and learn their ways, we must sit silently and wait for them to come around us. We may go into the woods and sit upon a log or stump, without seeing the slightest sign of life, and apparently none exists in the vicinity, but many pairs of sharp eyes have observed our coming long before we could see them.

After a period of silence the small life will again become active, and in the course of an afternoon, if we are cautious as well as observant, we will find that we have seen and heard a great deal that is of absorbing interest.

Larger openings begin to appear among the trees, the sunlit spaces become broader, and patches of distant sky come into the picture. There are fewer obstructions in the course, and the little boat floats out into comparatively open country. Tall graceful elms, with the delicate lacery of their green-clad branches etched against the clouds, a few groups of silvery poplars, some straggling sycamores, and bunches of gnarled stubby willows line the margins of the stream, and detached masses of them appear out on the boggy land.

The Winding River flows through a happy valley. From a bank among the trees a silver glint is seen upon water, near a clump of willows, not so very far away, but the sinuous stream will loiter for hours before it comes to them.

A few cattle, several horses, and a solitary crow give a life note to the landscape. A faint wreath

of smoke is visible above some trees on the right, there are echoes from a hidden barnyard, and a fussy bunch of tame ducks are splashing around the end of a half-sunken flat-bottomed boat attached to a stake.

A freckled faced boy, of about ten, with faded blue overalls, frayed below the knees, and sustained by one suspender, is watching a crooked fishpole and a silent cork, near the roots of a big sycamore that shades a pool.

He wears a rudimentary shirt, and his red hair projects, like little streaks of flame, through his torn hat. His bare feet and legs are very dirty. He looks out from under the uncertain rim of the hat with a comical expression when asked what luck he is having, and holds up a willow switch, on which are suspended a couple of diminutive bullheads, and a small but richly colored sunfish. The spoil is not abundant, yet the freckled boy is happy.

After the boat has passed on nearly a quarter of a mile, his distant yell of triumph is heard. "I've got another one!" Pæons of victory from conquered walls could tell no more.

Farther on, the banks become a little higher, the stream is wider and faster. In the distance a dingy old water-mill creeps into the landscape. This means that a dam will soon be encountered. The boat will have to be pulled out and put back into the river below it. For this it will be necessary to arouse the cooperative interest of the miller in some way, for the boat is not built of feathers.

A crude mill-race has been dug parallel to the river's course, and the clumsy old-fashioned wheel is slowly and noisily churning away under the side of the mill. The structure was once painted a dull red, but time has blended it into a warm neutral gray. Some comparatively recent repairs on the sides and roof give it a mottled appearance, and add picturesque quality. A few small houses are scattered along the road leading to the mill, and the general store is visible among the trees farther back, for the little boat has now come to the sleepy village in the back country. There are no railroad trains or trolley-cars to desecrate its repose, for these are far away. Several slowly moving figures appear on the road. There is an event of some kind down near the mill, and the

well-worn chairs on the platform in front of the store have been deserted. Whatever is going on must be carefully inspected and considered at once.

There is an interesting foregound between the boat and the mill, the reflections to be seen from the opposite bank seem tempting, and an absorbing half hour is spent under the tree, with the sketch book and soft pencil.

The curious group on the other side is evidently indulging in all sorts of theories and speculations as to "wot that feller over there is tryin' to do." It is a foregone conclusion that curiosity will eventually triumph, and soon the strain becomes too intense for further endurance. The old miller, with the dust of his trade copiously sifted into his clothes and whiskers, gets into the flat-bottomed boat near the dam and slowly poles it across. All of the details of the voyage are attentively scrutinized from the other side.

After a friendly "good morning," a few remarks about the stage of the water, and the weather prospects, he stands around for a while, and then looks over at the sketch. He produces a pair of

brass-rimmed spectacles, which enables him to study it more carefully, and he is much pleased. He "haint never noticed the scene much from this side, but it looks pretty. After this is finished off you'd better come 'round on the other side, so's to show the platform an' the sign. A feller made a photograph of my mill once, an' 'e promised to send me one, but 'e didn't never do it." The long remembered incident, and the broken faith, seemed to disturb him, and he appeared to be concerned as to the destiny of the sketch. He wanted it "to put up in the mill."

His befloured whiskers and general appearance suggest more sketches, and he is induced to pose for a few minutes. One of the drawings is presented to him, and the curiosity on the other bank is now getting to the breaking point. Only the absence of transportation facilities prevents the crossing of the anxious spectators. There have been several additions to the gaping group on the other side. A portly female, in a gingham dress, stands bareheaded in the road, contemplating the scene from afar, and a couple of barking dogs have come down to the edge of the water.

The deliberate and dignified approach of the keeper of the general store lends a new note of interest.

After further pleasant conversation, the dusty miller helps to drag the boat around the dam. He waves a cheerful farewell, recrosses the stream, and immediately becomes the center of concentrated interest. The fat woman in the road waddles down to the mill, and a number of bare-headed children come running down the slope, who have peeked at the proceedings from secluded points of vantage.

As the boat floats on, the figures become indistinct, the houses fade into the soft distance, the mill, like those of the gods, grinds slowly on, and, with the next bend in the river, the sleepy village is gone.

The story of the eventful day percolates from the store off into the back country, and weeks later we hear it from a rheumatic old dweller in the marshy land, near the beginning of the sand hills, He unfortunately "wasn't to town" at the time.

"A feller come 'long in a boat an' stopped at the mill. He was 'round thar fer over an hour

an' drawed some pitchers of it. He made one o' the old man with 'is pipe showin'. He was some city feller, an' had to git the old man to help 'im with 'is boat 'round the dam. The old man's

"WITH THE NEXT BEND IN THE RIVER THE SLEEPY VILLAGE IS GONE"

got a pitcher 'e made of 'im stickin' up in the mill now. A feller like him oughter larn some trade, instid o' foolin' away 'is time makin' pitchers. Nobody 'ud ever buy one o' them dam' things in a thousand years. I'll bet 'e was spyin' fer the rail-

road, an' they'll prob'ly be 'long here makin' a *sur*vey before long."

A little farther down is a loose-jointed bridge with some patent medicine signs on it. Another sign tells the users not to drive over the structure "faster than a walk." Any kind of a speed limit in this slumbrous land seems preposterous, but the cautionary board is there, peppered over with little holes, made by repeated charges of small shot, and partially defaced with sundry initials cut into it with jack-knives. Some crude and unknown humorist has changed some of the letters and syllables in the patent medicine signs, and made them even more eloquent.

Another lone fisherman is on the bridge, watching a cork that bobs idly on the dimpled tide below. Another single suspender supports some deteriorated overalls. Possibly the freckled boy up the river was wearing the rest of the suspenders. He is an old man, with heavy gray eyebrows, and long white whiskers that sway gently in the soft wind. His face has an air of patient resignation. He wears a faded colored shirt and a weather-beaten straw hat. His feet, encased in cowhide

boots, hang down over the edge of the rickety structure, and he sadly shakes his head when asked if he has caught any fish. His lure has been ineffectual and he is about ready to go home. There is still a faint lingering hope that the cork may be suddenly submerged, and the appearance of a new object of interest has decided him to remain a little while longer.

He explains that "the wind ain't right fer fishin'. I've seen fish caught off'en this bridge so fast you couldn't bait the hooks, but the wind has to be south. Besides the water's all roily to-day an' the fish can't see nothin'. I bin drownin' worms 'ere most all day, an' I ain't had a bite, an' I'm goin' to quit."

Just after the boat had passed under the bridge, a dead minnow floated along on the current. A large pickerel broke water and seized it. His sweeping tail made a loud swish, and the water boiled with commotion as he turned and dove with his prize.

Instantly the dejected figure on the bridge became thrilled with a new life, and a torrent of profanity filled the air.

"Now wot d'ye think o' that! The gosh dangled idjut's bin 'round 'ere all the time, an' me settin' 'ere with worms fer 'im. They's a lot o' fish in this 'ere river that I'll teach sumpen to before I'm through with 'em. I'm a pretty old man, but you bet I'm goin' to play the game while I'm 'ere. I wonder where 'e went with that dam' minnie!"

The boat goes tranquilly on, and in the dim distance the old man is actively moving around on the bridge, flourishing his cane pole and casting the tempting bait all over the surface of the water, evidently hoping that the "gosh dangled idjut" will rise again.

The river now comes to the beginning of the vast marsh, through which its well-defined channel follows a tortuous route among big wet stretches of high grasses and bulrushes, winds with innumerable turns, makes long sweeps and loops, and comes back, almost doubling itself in its serpentine course. The current slackens and the water becomes deeper.

The cries of the marsh birds are heard, and muskrats are swimming at the apexes of the long V-shaped wakes out on the open water. On small

boggy spots are piles of empty freshwater clam shells where these interesting little animals have feasted. As the crows seem to dominate the sand hills, the muskrats contribute much picturesque quality to the marsh. Their little houses add in-

"THE RIVER NOW COMES TO THE BEGINNING OF THE VAST MARSH"

terest to the wet places, and traces of them appear all over the low land.

A wild duck hurries her downy young into the thick grasses—a few turtles tumble hastily from the bogs into the water—a large blue heron rises slowly out of an unseen retreat, and trails his long

legs after him in rhythmic flight down the marsh —mysterious wings are heard among the rushes— immense flocks of blackbirds fill the air—there is a splash out among the lily pads, where a hungry fish has captured his unsuspecting prey, and the deep sonorous bass of a philosophic bullfrog resounds from concealed recesses.

Another bend in the channel reveals a flock of wild ducks feeding quietly along the edges of the weeds. The intrusion is quickly detected and they swiftly take wing. A sinister head, with beady eyes, appears on the surface behind the boat, and is instantly withdrawn. A big snapping-turtle has come up to investigate the cause of the dark shadow which has passed along the bottom.

Some open wet ground comes into view around the next curve, and some lazy cattle look up inquiringly. After their curiosity is satisfied, they turn their heads away and resume their reflections.

The Winding River has its solemn hours as well as those of gladness. Heavy masses of low gray clouds are creeping into the sky, the shadows are disappearing and a moody monotone has come over the landscape. Deep mutterings of thunder,

and a few vivid flashes, herald the approach of a storm.

Some thick willows, which can be reached through openings among the lily pads, a short distance from the main channel, offer a convenient shelter, and from it the coming drama can be contemplated.

The big drops are soon heard among the leaves, the distant trees loom in ghostly stillness through veils of moving mist, the delicate color tones gently change into a lower scale, and the voices of the falling waters come. The reeds and rushes bend humbly, and there are subdued cries from the feathered life that is hurrying to shelter among them. The rain patters and murmurs out among the thick grasses and on the open river.

There are noble beauties and sublimities in the storm, which those who only love the sunshine can never know. Truly "Our Lady of the Rain" weaves a marvelous spell, and her song is of surpassing beauty, as she trails her robes in majesty over the river and through the marshy wastes. Her pictures blend with her measures, for a song may have other mediums than sound, and there

are many symphonies that are silent. The prelude in the lowering clouds, and the melody of the loosened waters, bring to us a sense of unity and closer communion with the powers in the skies above us.

The sheets of flying waters have gone on up the marsh, a long rift has appeared in the clouds beyond the hills, a bright gleam has come through it, and the end of a rainbow touches a clump of poplars far away. The storm is over and the little boat is piloted out through the lily pads, to resume its journey on the tranquil stream. It finally reaches the sand hills. The river narrows and runs more rapidly as it leaves the swamp. Another sleepy little town, with two or three bridges, appears ahead. There are more still figures on the bank, watching corks on lines attached to long cane poles, which are stuck into the earth and supported by forked sticks. The labor of holding them has proved too great and natural forces have been utilized to avoid unnecessary exertion. The anglers appear much depressed and are soaking wet. A nearby bridge would have provided a refuge from the recent rain, but pos-

sibly their intellectual limitations did not permit of advantage being taken of it.

A friendly inquiry as to their success evokes sleepy responses, and looks of languid curiosity. "The fishin' ain't no good. I got one yisterd'y, but I guess the water's too high fer 'em to bite."

We have now come to the end of the Winding River. Its waters glide peacefully out and blend into the blue immensity of the great lake. Like a human life that has run its course through the vicissitudes and varied paths of the years, they have ceased to flow, and have been gathered into unknown depths beyond.

There are many winding rivers, but this one has numberless joyful and poetic associations. On its peaceful waters many sketch-books have been filled, and happy hours dreamed away. From the little boat wonderful vistas have unfolded, and marvelous skies have been contemplated.

The heavens at twilight, flushed with glorious afterglows in orange, green and purple—the clear still firmament at mid-day, lightly flecked with little wisps of smoky vapor—the lazy white masses against the infinite blue, and the billowing thun-

derheads on the horizon on quiet afternoons—the stormy array of dark battalions of wind-blown clouds, with their trailing sheets of rain—and many other convolutions of the great panoramas in the skies, have been humbly observed from the little boat. The Winding River has reflected them, and the picturesque sweeps and bends, the masses of trees on the banks, with the silvery stretches of slowly moving waters, have given wonderful foregrounds to these entrancing prospects.

Fancy has woven rare fabrics, and builded strange and fragile dreams among these glowing and ever-changing symphonies of light and color. The little boat has been a kingdom in a world of enchantment. The domes and vistas of a fairy-land have been visible from it. The Psalm of Life has seemed to float softly over the bosom of the river, and mingle with the harmonies of infinite hues in the heavens beyond. The lances of the departing sun have trailed over the waters, and dark purple shadows have gently crept into the landscape. Manifold voices are hushed, and the story of another day is told.

Nature, seemingly jealous of other companionship, yields her spiritual treasures only to him who comes alone into her sweet solitudes. Before him who comes in reverence, the filmy veils are lifted, and the poetic soul is gently led into mystic paths beyond.

In her great anthems of sublimity and power, she fills our hearts with awe, and appals us with our insignificance, but her soft lullabies, which we hear in the secluded places, are within the capacity of our emotions. It is here that she comes to us in her tenderness and beauty, and gently touches the finer chords of our being.

One may stand upon a mountain-top and behold the splendors of awful immensities, but the imagination is soon lost in infinity, and only the atom on the rock remains. The music of the swaying rushes, the whispers among rippling waters and softly moving leaves, and the voices of the Little Things that sing around us, all come within the compass of our spiritual realm. It is with them that we must abide if we would find contentment of heart and soul.

The love of moving water is one of our primal

instincts. The tired mind seeks it, and weary travelers on the deserts of life are sustained by the hope of living waters beyond. There are winding rivers on which we may float in the world of our fancy, and it is on them that we may find peace when sorrows have afflicted us and our burdens have made scars. They may flow through lordly forests, and stately mansions and magic gardens may be reflected in their limpid tides. The songs of these rivers are the songs of the heart, and in them there is no note of triumph over the fallen, or despair of the stricken. They are songs of courageous life and melodies of the living things, but only those who listen may hear them.

Sometimes, in faint half-heard tones from far away, we may imagine echoes from another world than ours, and, as we enter into the final gloom, these harmonies may become divine. In the darker recesses of our intellectual life we find shadows that never move. They seem to lie like black sinister bars across our mental paths. We know not what is beyond them, and we shrink from a nameless terror. Into these shadows our loved ones have gone. They have returned into the

Elemental Mystery. Their voices have not come back to us, but their cadences may be in the singing winds and amid the patter of the summer rain.

Our Ship of Dreams can bear a wondrous cargo. We can sometimes see its mirage in the still skies beyond the winding rivers, though its sails and spars are far below the horizon's rim. We know that on it are those who beckon, and its wave-kissed prow is toward us. Frail though its timbers be, the years may bring it, but if it never comes, we have seen the picture, and new banners have been unfurled before it.

HE "WAITED UNTIL HE SAW HIS STAR COME OVER THE HORIZON IN THE PATH OF THE YOUNG MOON"

CHAPTER XIV

THE RED ARROW

WHILE merciless masters have driven the red man from the dune country, indelible impressions of his race remain. His nomenclature is on the maps, and the lakes, rivers, and streams carry names that were precious to his people. His mythology still envelops the region with a halo of romance and fable.

The dust of his forefathers has mingled with the hills, and time has obliterated nearly every material trace of him, except those among the imperishable stones. The débris of the little quarries is still visible on small promontories, and in the depressions along the ridges, where the pines have held the soil against the action of the wind and rain. Here we find innumerable chips and fragments of broken stones, left by the workers, who fashioned the implements of war and peace on these sequestered spots.

Occasionally an imperfect or unfinished arrow or spear-head appears among the refuse, which the patient artificer discarded. Many perfect specimens are found, but these are seldom discovered near the sites of the rude workshops. They are uncovered by the shifting sands in the "blow outs," where the winds eddy on the sides of hills that may have held their secrets for centuries, and turned up out of the fertile soil in the back country, by the plowshares of a race that carried the bitter cup of affliction to the aborigine.

The little flakes of flint may be scattered over a space forty or fifty feet across, and many thousands of perfect points may have gone forth from it, as messages of death to the hearts of enemies, or to pierce the quivering flesh of the innocent.

The refined ingenuity of man has ever been applied to things that kill. The art of annihilation has attracted some of the dominant intellects of mankind, and the extinction of life has been the industry of millions since human history began.

The feathered shaft of the savage, and the steel

shell of the white man, go upon the same errand, and they both leave the same dark stain upon the green earth. The children of men, in all ages, have been taught that war is the only path to glory.

Under His quiet skies the living things must die, because they live. The Great Riddle awaits solution beyond the confines of our philosophy, and in the midst of our speculative wanderings, we become dust. Theology is as helpless before a burial mound in the wilderness, as beside the gilded tomb of a prince of the church.

The spiritual needs of the primitive savage were administered by his tribal gods, and the spirits of his mythology. In his child-like faith he believed the favor of a Great Spirit to be in the sunshine, and that omnipotent wrath was thundered in the storms. His good manitous presided over his fortunes in life, and gently led him into fabled hunting grounds beyond the grave.

He was a fatalist, and not being civilized, his theology was imperfect.

Civilization approached him with a Bible in one hand and a bottle in the other, and the decay of his race began. The finger of fate had touched

him, and the last heart-broken remnants of once happy and powerful tribes were tied and led away by benign and Christian soldiers. They carried crushed spirits and shattered lives to an alien soil, which an all-wise conqueror had selected for them, leaving their burned homes, and the bones of those they loved, in the land of their birth.

The moralist finds abundant food for reflection in the sufferings of the weak, at the hands of the strong, and the triumph of might over helplessness, but the Indian interfered with enlightened selfishness and he perished.

The record of the expatriation and the practical extinction of the Pottawatomies, who lived in this region, is written upon dark pages of our history, but perhaps they had no rights as living creatures that an enlightened government was bound to respect.

When the fog rolls in from the distant waters, and steals through the pines, wraith-like forms of a forgotten race seem to haunt the scenes of by-gone years. We may imagine the march of phantom throngs through the trees, to meet silent battalions beyond the hills. The sands seem to

yield to the folds of a gray mantle that is laid upon them, and retreat into obscurity.

When the night shadows come into the dune country, the spell of mystery and poetry comes with them. The sorcery of the dark places leads us into a land of dreams and unreality.

Out on the tremulous surface of the lake, we may fancy the lifting of silvery paddles in the path of the moon's reflections, and the furtive movement across the bar of light, of mystic shapes in phantom canoes.

Mingled with the lispings of the little waves, we may hear ghostly prows touch the sand, and see spectral figures file into the hills. The faint echoes of strokes upon flint come out of the shadows.

The spirits of an ancient race have gone to their quarries, for arrowheads and spears, for the unseen battles with evil gods.

Voices in the night wind recall them, and they go out into the purple mists, that come upon the face of the waters before the dawn.

Sometimes among the silences, comes the beautiful dream form of Naeta, the Spirit of the Dunes,

who was once an Indian maiden with laughing eyes and raven hair. It was she who lured the soul of Taqua, a mighty warrior, who first saw her in the silver moonlight among the pines, in a far-off time, before the first legends of the people were told.

Love stole into their lives and brought with him a train of sorrows, which, one by one, were laid upon aching hearts, until the burden became too heavy to bear. A dark shadow fell upon the little wigwam, and the world-old story of shattered faith, that sent two souls adrift, was told by the two trails that led from the ashes before the door.

The heart of Taqua became black, and for many days and nights he sped over sandy hills, and along rocky shores, with the deadly gleam of revenge in his eyes, and the bitterness of hate in his breast.

Once he sat brooding by the shore of the great lake, and saw a fragment of red flint, which the numberless waves had worn into the rude resemblance of an arrow-head. He picked it out of the wet sand, and with patient skill, he fashioned it to a cutting point. He fastened it into

a shaft of ironwood, which he feathered with the pinions of a hawk.

He then climbed to the top of a high promontory, and waited until he saw his star come over the horizon, in the path of the young moon. It was at this time that he could talk to Manabush, the hero god, who was the intermediary between the Indian and his manitous.

When he was certain of the presence of Manabush, he held his red arrow before him—told the story of his wrongs—and consecrated the arrow to the heart of his enemy. When the dawn came, and Manabush was gone, he placed the arrow in his quiver, and began his march upon the path of vengeance.

Through weary years he followed it, finding upon it many cross trails, and the footprints of those who had gone before, upon the same errand. The path led him into strange places, and through numberless dark defiles, into which the sunlight never came.

It led him through lonesome loveless years, that marked his brow with wrinkled hate, and hardened the lines that are only curved by smiles.

Time finally bent the sinewy form, the springing strides became shorter, and their vigor became less. The frosts and sorrows of many winters had turned the dark locks white, when, at the end of one summer—just as the first leaves began to fall—he once more journeyed to the high rock to invoke the aid and counsel of the hero god.

His dimmed eyes once more sought the star, and when he saw its light, he told Manabush the story of his fruitless quest. His tired limbs could no longer keep the trail, and his weary arms could no longer bend the bow to the arrow's length.

Long he talked and meditated, and a voice seemed to come out of the darkness. It was a voice of sweetness and mercy—a voice of love and forgiveness—that told of the futility of hatred and revenge, which would be lost in the gloom of the Great Beyond, when the earth should know him no more.

A new light burst upon him. He became glorified with a new thought. He resolved that he would no longer carry the red arrow in his quiver. He would abandon the black and sinister trail which he had hoped to redden with the blood of

his enemy, and part with this evil thing that had mastered him.

When the morning sun came over the hills, and bathed them in the radiance of a new day, he straightened his bent figure, and resolutely placed the red arrow in the bow. With a new strength, he drew the shaft to its full length, and, with a loud twang, the red arrow sang in the morning air.

His poor old eyes could follow it only a little way, but he saw it strike the shining bark of a little tree. With a sad smile—the first of many years—he saw the leaves of the little tree turn red.

He looked for the arrow in vain. It had gone on through the forest, and at night he found that it had struck many trees, for their leaves were also red. The next day he traveled on, and the scarlet leaves were ever before his eyes.

At last, tired and footsore, he laid down and slept. There came to him in his dreams the beautiful Naeta. She told him of a long journey through the years; how she had wearily sought him, how she had patiently followed the tangled threads of fate, hoping to find the end, where the sun might

shine, without bitterness, without hatred—with love and repentance in her heart.

Her feet had faltered on her weary way, and many times she had grasped the little trees to keep from falling.

He awoke and looked again into the forest. He saw that these little trees were touched with gold.

He then closed his eyes in eternal sleep, and the Indian Summer had come upon the land.

The red arrow and the repentant hand had transfigured the hills, and the glory of the Divine was upon them.

THE END

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